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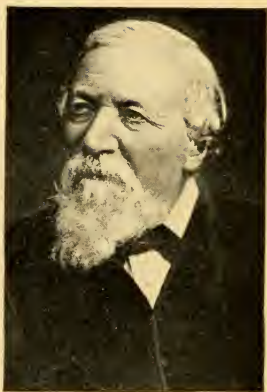


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ROBERT BROWNING.

# POEMS NARRATIVE AND LYRICAL

REQUIRED FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE

EDITED

WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

BY

ROBERT P. ST. JOHN

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
THE COMMERCIAL HIGH SCHOOL, BROOKLYN, N.Y.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE poems in this volume are those suggested for reading in the later years of the high-school course. They have been edited as simply as possible, with the desire to be of service to both pupil and teacher.

The editor wishes to acknowledge his obligation to his sister, Emily P. St. John, of the Manual Training High School of Brooklyn, for assistance in the preparation of "The Life of Browning" and the notes on his poems. He is also much indebted to the editors of numerous preceding editions of Gray, Goldsmith, Byron, and Browning.

R. P. ST. J.



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## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF POETRY

ANTHROPOLOGY tells us that poetry, music, the drama, and dancing grew up together and were originally one art. Savages all the world over have been accustomed after the day's work to meet around the camp-fire for social intercourse. There the rhythm of the rude dance awakened their emotions and they sought to communicate even when language was so imperfect that they could not understand one another unless speech was supplemented by gesture, signs, and acting. While the entire company kept time to the tom-tom, or to a single syllable endlessly repeated, a great hunter perhaps rushed in frenzy from the shadows and half sung, half acted, the story of the day's exploits.

“I saw a deer.  
He did not see me.”

And in word and act, keeping perfect time to the rhythm of the dance, he crept towards the supposed deer, threw his lance, and rushed forward. When in this manner the events of the day had been recounted, one by one the company took up important past exploits that remained in their memories. Perhaps several of the dancers helped to present the story of the bear that had been killed a week before. When the hurricane of a month before was undertaken, most of the

dancers were able to take an active part, for through many repetitions both words and acting had become more or less conventionalized. The tribal battle of a year before was shouted as a chorus, for every savage was acquainted with the customary words.

Such is the probable theory of the origin of the ballad. The word itself means dance song, for the savages often danced around the camp-fire to no music except the words of a crude song. Indeed, in Scotland, and even in America within the memory of people who died but a few years ago, men and women engaged in evening dances accompanied by no music except the rhythm of a ballad that they sang. No individual seemed to produce these songs. They came as the work of the community. They were better than any individual of those times could produce. They arose because the communal life stirred the emotions of men and came to song. Just as in the process of evolution certain plants and animals survived because they were the best fitted to cope with their environment, so in the growth of the ballad, those expressions and words were preserved which represented most adequately the proper thought and emotion. Thus while generations passed, the communal ballads developed and became better than any individual could have written.

When the communities grew larger so that all could not gather around one camp-fire, and individual occupations appeared and culture advanced so that strangers were permitted to pass from village to village, minstrels arose who entertained circles of listeners by singing ballads which they collected wherever they could find



them. Gradually the minstrels forgot the names of minor and remote heroes and ascribed the marvellous deeds recounted to some great national character just as to-day stories that are in keeping with Lincoln's personality are often erroneously ascribed to Lincoln, although the tales were, in fact, famous long before his time. Sometimes ballads that were originally separate were joined. In this way it has happened in the history of almost every race that a group of ballads relating to some great national hero has been woven together into an epic. Until minstrels deliberately revised ballads or joined together ballads after this manner, there were no individual poets. Probably a ballad in praise of a patron was the first poetry strictly original with one author.

The Robin Hood Ballads that we know, or the ballads popular among the country folk in England a century or two ago, were, of course, very different in content from the ballads sung around the camp-fire by our savage ancestors. Yet the essence, the spirit, of each is the same. Primitive poetry, we have seen, is an emotional view of life rhythmically expressed. Such is all true poetry whether written to-day or written two hundred years ago or before the flood. Human life cannot be altered fundamentally, but the modes of living are continually changing. Poetry must adapt itself accordingly. The songs of the South Sea Islanders served adequately their needs, but they cannot serve ours. Poetry must accommodate itself to human thought and progress or it will fail to awaken the emotional response which is the source of its power.

One would think that poetry would always arise natu-

rally from the life of those who produced it, and therefore that the verse produced from generation to generation would change as insensibly and gradually as civilization changes. But art, including poetry, is governed to so great an extent by precedent, because of the influence of the work of geniuses and great critics, that it lags behind the material progress that men make and catches up only when, through the influence of other geniuses or great critics, it is forced to make the necessary readjustment. When poetry thus suddenly changes in order to adapt itself to the progress of civilization, the process is often called a return to nature. A return to human nature, conditioned as it is every instant by ten thousand forces which are continuously developing it, would be a more accurate expression. Such a movement is a revival of the past only so far as the present has become artificial and neglectful of emotion or of some other of the fundamental principles of human art; it is a search after the new in so far as there have arisen in the progress of civilization thoughts and feelings that have never found expression in poetry. The great poet, however, is often a prophet. He frequently feels the warmth of the coming day when less sensitive minds are hardly aware of a gleam along the tops of the mountains. In this sense does the progress of poetry often precede the development of human life and civilization.

In the history of English literature the most important return to nature is that which reached its climax in 1798 and is known as the Romantic Movement. The poetry of the previous period exemplified in the work of Pope, was the product of a conservative, formal, cold,

intellectual, utilitarian, and aristocratic age. This so-called classical poetry conformed to an artistic standard so closely that it was seldom very original; it often sacrificed the thought to secure a polished form; the ideas expressed were sensible rather than beautiful or passionate; high moral views were rarely presented; the social life of men and women of breeding and culture was usually the theme. On the other hand, romantic poetry was free once more to represent in any one of a vast number of artistic verse forms whatever interested men and stirred their emotions; but whatever it treated it presented in an æsthetic and imaginative aspect, and left argument and instruction to prose writers. It was based rather on the life of the individual than on the life of the social group. This is seen in a love for solitude or at least for nature unaltered by man. The standpoint was the subjective view of the individual poet rather than the objective aspect common to the crowd. It upheld the individual rights, not merely of the great, but even of infants, and of the poor, the weak, and the lowly.

The Romantic Movement grew out of a great wave of domestic and political reform that swept over Europe during the eighteenth century. This period in history is sometimes known as the Age of Revolution because of the great changes that occurred in social conditions and later in government. The American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1798 mark crises in its progress. As might be expected the upheaval took place intellectually before it was worked out in deeds.

Writings that did much to bring about the French Revolution were written as early as 1760 by Jean Jacques

Rousseau. In poetry the first important evidence of the new movement is found in Thomson's *Seasons*, published in 1730. The author, while classical in manner, wrote on nature and rejected the heroic couplet, the accepted verse form of most of the classical poets. The works of Gray and Goldsmith, published a few years later, are likewise transitional poems that mark the progress of the struggle between the old and the new. In the works of Byron the movement found most intense expression. Its influence is still felt, probably not because the movement is still in progress, but because of the permanent effects it has left on art. This influence is felt even in the poems of the most modern of the poets in this volume, Robert Browning, at once representative of his own age and of the eager questioning soul of the nineteenth century.

POEMS NARRATIVE AND LYRICAL



# ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THOMAS GRAY

THOMAS GRAY, the author of *The Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, was born in London, December 26, 1716. To his father, a wealthy broker and scrivener, he owed little but ill-treatment and neglect. His mother, with the assistance of a maiden sister, kept a millinery shop and so supported her children and provided as well as she was able for Gray's education. He was sent to Eton, where he distinguished himself in scholarship, but rather than join his comrades at their games, he preferred to wander in the fields about Stoke-Pogis.

On leaving Cambridge in 1738 without having completed the work required for a degree, he travelled in Europe with his friend, Horace Walpole, the son of the Whig minister. He desired on his return in 1741 to study law; and he took his degree of LL.B. in 1743. He did not, however, become a lawyer, but took residence at Cambridge University, where, with the exception of two years spent at the British Museum, he continued to reside for the remainder of his life. He had until 1768 no official connection with the University, and did not teach, but lived the life of a quiet student.

Next to Milton he was the most scholarly of the English poets. He was proficient in almost every branch of learning except mathematics. He avoided



society, and in the college chambers lived the life of a gentle recluse. He had a dignified bearing and a melancholy cast of mind. He was fastidious almost to effeminacy. His clothes and manners were faultless. In his orderly room was a harpsichord and at his window china vases of flowers. He had a great horror of fire and had exercised his ingenuity in devising several sorts of fire-escapes, which he frequently used as a result of the false alarms of his fellow-students. His character was so peculiar that even after he was made professor of modern history in 1768, he was still subjected to various petty annoyances by the rude and thoughtless undergraduates.

During his mother's life, Gray spent most of his vacations at Stoke-Pogis, where his mother and her sister lived in a beautiful country house that commanded a distant view of Eton. There he wrote several of his famous poems, and there with love and affection he repaid the two heroic women for the sacrifices they had made in his behalf. The aunt died in 1749 and was buried in Stoke-Pogis churchyard, and four years later Gray's mother was laid beside her. On a slab are the following lines which Gray himself wrote: "In the vault beneath are deposited, in hope of a joyful resurrection, the remains of Mary Antrobus. She died, unmarried, Nov. 5, 1749, aged sixty-six. In the same pious confidence, beside her friend and sister, here sleep the remains of Dorothy Gray, widow; the tender, careful mother of many children, one of whom alone has the misfortune to survive her. She died March, 1753, aged sixty-seven." Without further inscription under the same tombstone, in 1771, was buried Thomas Gray, the poet.

As a result of his fastidious taste and critical deliberation Gray wrote little verse. As he grew older his writings were romantic in character, but he never opposed his native classical desire for precision and polish. In 1740 he was so little conscious of the true nature of poetry or of the new trend in life and verse that he began to write a Latin epic poem that was to contain Locke's philosophy in poetic form. In 1742 he wrote the three odes, *On the Spring*, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and to *Adversity*. These contained the conventional classical moralizing and personified abstractions. In 1750 the *Elegy* was published. In 1757 appeared *The Bard* and the *Progress of Poesy*, poems that were highly imaginative and more romantic in form and spirit than the work of any of his contemporaries. The Norse and Welsh poems that appeared a few years later abandoned classical models altogether and sought in the literature of rude and untutored races those human characteristics and passions which are the basis of all true poetry.

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THE ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY  
CHURCHYARD

THE *Elegy*, published 1750, stands midway between Gray's classical and romantic poems; and its style gives evidence of both classical and romantic tendencies. The theme was not new. Somewhat similar moralizing in a graveyard had appeared in previous classical poems written by Parnell, Young, Blair, and others. The poet accepts society as it is; there is no rebellion or questioning of authority or convention. Nevertheless, his feeling is democratic, and he shows a strong sympathy with the tillers of the soil and with nature. The language is usually concrete, and the point of view is subjective and individual.

When the poem was first published, the departure from the heroic couplet was made less evident by printing the lines one after another without stanzaic breaks. It appeared in the form of a six-penny *brochure* and was well received; four editions were printed within a year. Its popularity has increased with the passage of time. It is to-day the most widely known poem in English literature, and it has been translated into various languages. If the passion expressed is chill and stately, it nevertheless, springs from human life. No other English poem is so nearly perfect in technique. Its polished diction, its remarkable felicity of expression, its exquisite metre, make it a finished work of art.

THOMAS GRAY •

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD°

THE curfew° tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd wind° slowly o'er the lea,  
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.°

Now fades the glimmering landscape° on the sight, 5  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,  
The moping owl does to the moon complain 10  
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,  
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,°  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forever laid, 15  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call° of incense-breathing morn,  
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply<sup>o</sup> her evening care ;  
No children run to lisp<sup>o</sup> their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe<sup>o</sup> has broke :  
How jocund<sup>o</sup> did they drive their team afield !  
How bowed<sup>o</sup> the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ; 30  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Awaits alike the inevitable hour : — 35  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.<sup>o</sup>

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,  
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault<sup>o</sup>  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn,<sup>o</sup> or animated bust,  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?  
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,<sup>o</sup>  
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire<sup>o</sup> ;  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre :

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
 Rich with the spoils of time<sup>o</sup> did ne'er unroll ; 50  
 Chill penury repressed their noble rage,  
 And froze the genial current<sup>o</sup> of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
 The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;  
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, 55  
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden,<sup>o</sup> that, with dauntless breast,  
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood,  
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,  
 Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

The applause of listening senates to command,  
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
 And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade : nor circumscribed alone 65  
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined :  
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70  
 Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride<sup>o</sup>  
 With incense kindled at the Muses' flame.<sup>o</sup>

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
 Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;  
 Along the cool sequestered vale of life 75  
 They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply :  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,<sup>o</sup> 85  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious<sup>o</sup> drops the closing eye requires ; 90  
E'en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,<sup>o</sup>  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee,<sup>o</sup> who, mindful of the unhonored dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;  
If chance, by lonely contemplation led, 95  
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate, —

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,  
“ Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn  
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn :<sup>o</sup> 100

“ There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.



“ Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,<sup>o</sup> 105  
 Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,  
 Now drooping, woful wan, like one forlorn,  
 Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

“ One morn I missed him on the customed hill,<sup>o</sup>  
 Along the heath, and near his favorite tree; 110  
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

“ The next, with dirges due in sad array  
 Slow through the churchway path we saw him  
 borne: —  
 Approach and read (for thou can’st read<sup>o</sup>) the lay 115  
 ‘Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.’<sup>o</sup>”

### THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth  
 A youth, to fortune and to fame unknown:  
 Fair science<sup>o</sup> frowned not on his humble birth,  
 And melancholy marked him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,  
 Heaven did a recompense as largely send:  
 He gave to misery all he had, a tear,  
 He gained from heaven (’twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125  
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode  
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose)  
 The bosom<sup>o</sup> of his Father and his God.

## NOTES

1. 1. **curfew.** The word is derived from the French and means fire-cover. The crowded timber-built towns of the Middle Ages were continually menaced by fire, which was especially liable to break out while the inhabitants slept. The police regulation accordingly arose that at the ringing of a bell in the evening all fires on open hearths must be covered or banked for the night. This custom was said to have been introduced into England by William the Conqueror.

1. 2. **The lowing herd wind.** The picture of the slow-moving cattle that follow the various cow-paths across the pasture toward the barn is clearly indicated. *Wind* instead of *winds* emphasizes the fact that the herd is a group of individuals.

1. 4. **And leaves the world to darkness and to me.** When the ploughman disappeared in the twilight the poet was left alone with the rural scenes and the graveyard about him, but presently they too disappeared in the darkness and the poem became subjective — a record of a poet's thoughts concerning the life and death of the simple poor.

1. 5. **Now fades the glimmering landscape.** Such pictures were favorites with romantic writers. They liked the uncertain light of evening and the quiet disturbed only by such sounds as the blundering May-beetle's buzzing flight and the muffled tinkle of distant sheep-bells as the woolly creatures sank one by one down to sleep. Especially in keeping with romantic setting is the hoot from the church tower of the mysterious owl.

l. 13. **that yew tree.** There is still in Stoke-Pogis churchyard a great yew tree under which it is said Gray often sat.

l. 17. **The breezy call.** The peasants might be roused from sleep by the swallows that twittered on the thatched roof, or by the crow of the cock, or by the hunter's horn: or they might be summoned forth by the mere beauty of the new day — the breezy call of morning.

l. 22. **ply.** To be busy with.

l. 23. **lisp.** Beetles drone; bells tinkle; swallows twitter; and children lisp. The poet uses onomatopœic words; that is words that suggest the sound by imitating it.

l. 26. **glebe.** A poetic word for turf or soil.

l. 27. **jocund.** Not plodding wearily after a day of labor, but refreshed with the night's repose.

l. 28. **bowed.** The word presents an image of a tree as it begins to fall.

l. 36. **The paths of glory lead but to the grave.** Parkman tells us that in 1579 while the *Elegy* was a comparatively new poem, it was repeated by General Wolfe on the evening before he fell in the battle of Quebec.

“For two full hours the procession of boats, borne on the current, steered silently down the St. Lawrence. The stars were visible, but the night was moonless and sufficiently dark. The general was in one of the foremost boats, and near him was a young midshipman, John Robison, afterwards professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. He used to tell in his later life how Wolfe, with a low voice, repeated Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* to the officers about him. Probably it was to relieve the intense strain of his thoughts. Among the rest was the verse which his own fate was soon to illustrate, —

“‘The paths of glory lead but to the grave.’

‘Gentlemen’ he said, as his recital ended, ‘I would rather have written those lines than take Quebec.’”

1. 39. **the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault.** The wealthy, the noble, and the famous were not buried in the churchyard, but within the church where trophies were raised in their honor. See *Westminster Abbey* in Irving’s *Sketch-Book* for an account of such memorials. The roof of a vault was said to be fretted when it was ornamented with a design in relief of lines crossing at right angles.

1. 41. **storied urn.** An urn or vase with ornamentation that suggests a story or historical account. Milton in *Il Penseroso* speaks of storied windows.

1. 43. **Can honor’s voice provoke the silent dust.** Classical taste approved of the personification of abstractions such as, honor, ambition, grandeur, memory, flattery, and knowledge. This practice, however, was injurious to poetry. The ideas expressed in verse should be concrete; far from being obscure, they should be such as will make a vivid sensuous impression. The romantic poets avoided personified abstractions; they even preferred specific rather than general terms. This tendency is evident here in the poet’s use of the words owl, swallow, ivy, elm, yew, beech, and thorn.

1. 46. **Pregnant with celestial fire.** Full of a divine enthusiasm, which might have manifested itself in statecraft by swaying the rod of empire, or in poetry by playing upon men’s memories and emotions until they were aroused to ecstasy.

1. 50. **Spoils of Time.** What are these spoils?

1. 52. **froze the genial current.** Are poverty and poetry at odds with one another? Would not a true poet sing whatever his surroundings? Could there be a mute Milton? One would think that Burns would have been mute if a true

poet could be. How far can a man control his environment? The view that Gray took of the destiny of the uneducated poor may have been scientific, or it may not have been; but it certainly was charitable, and it was far more democratic than that taken by previous poets.

l. 57. **Some village Hampden.** In 1636 John Hampden refused to pay the ship-money tax which Charles I. was levying without the authority of Parliament. Concerning the little tyrant, see the note on line 37 of *The Deserted Village*.

When Gray wrote, there was still much unreasonable prejudice against Cromwell.

This stanza originally appeared as follows:—

“Some village Cato who with dauntless Breast  
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood;  
Some mute inglorious Tully here may rest;  
Some Cæsar, guiltless of his Country’s Blood.”

In the *Saturday Review* for June 19, 1875, a writer comments on the stanzas as follows:—

“Gray, having first of all put down the names of three Romans as illustrations of his meaning, afterwards deliberately struck them out and put the names of three Englishmen instead. This is a sign of a change in the taste of the age, a change with which Gray himself had a good deal to do. The deliberate wiping out of the names of Cato, Tully, and Cæsar, to put in the names of Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell, seems to us so obviously a change for the better that there seems to be no room for any doubt about it. It is by no means certain that Gray’s own contemporaries would have thought the matter equally clear. We suspect that to many people in his day it must have seemed a daring novelty to draw illustrations from English history, especially from

parts of English history which, it must be remembered, were then a great deal more recent than they are now. To be sure, in choosing English illustrations, a poet of Gray's time was in rather a hard strait. If he chose illustrations from the century or two before his own time, he could only choose names which had hardly got free from the strife of recent politics. If, in a poem of the nature of the *Elegy*, he had drawn illustrations from earlier times of English history, he would have found but few people in his day likely to understand him. . . .

"The change which Gray made in this well-known stanza is not only an improvement in a particular poem, it is a sign of a general improvement in taste. He first wrote according to the vicious taste of an earlier time, and he then changed it according to his own better taste. And of that better taste he was undoubtedly a prophet to others. Gray's poetry must have done a great deal to open men's eyes to the fact that they were Englishmen, and that on them, as Englishmen, English things had a higher claim than Roman, and that to them English examples ought to be more speaking than Roman ones. But there is another side of the case not to be forgotten. Those who would have regretted the change from Cato, Tully, and Cæsar to Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell, those who perhaps really did think that the bringing in of Hampden, Milton, and Cromwell was a degradation of what they would have called the Muse, were certainly not those who had the truest knowledge of Cato, Tully, and Cæsar. The 'classic' taste from which Gray helped to deliver us was a taste which hardly deserves to be called a taste. Pardonable perhaps in the first heat of the Renaissance, when 'classic' studies and objects had the charm of novelty, it had become by his day a mere silly fashion."

l. 71. Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride. From the time when poetry first began to be produced by individual authors until the days of the Romantic Movement poets were accustomed to write verse in praise of patrons. Oftentimes these patrons in return for flattery expressed, or for the distinction of having their names connected with famous works, rewarded the authors with money or remunerative positions. As a result many poets sought to make their poems acceptable to wealthy and influential patrons by expressing only such sentiments as would accord with the views of the powerful and the rich. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that in poetry the poor and weak had few advocates. With the changes that took place in society and public opinion in the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, poets also changed their views regarding patronage; Samuel Johnson, who was contemporaneous with Gray did his utmost to obtain intellectual independence for poetry. Gray himself never had a patron. Oliver Goldsmith dedicated his *Traveller*, in 1764, to his brother who was passing rich on forty pounds a year, and *The Deserted Village* to his friend Joshua Reynolds, from whom he could hope to receive no material advantage. Byron was so utterly opposed to the whole system of patronage that in the early part of his career he was unwilling even to receive from the publisher pay for his copyrights. Thus by the time the Romantic Movement had reached its climax the system of literary patronage had practically passed out of existence.

l. 72. At this point Gray originally inserted in the poem the four following stanzas:—

“The thoughtless world to majesty may bow,  
 Exalt the brave, and idolize success;  
 But more to innocence their safety owe,  
 Than pow’r or genius e’er conspired to bless.



And thou who mindful of th' unhonour'd dead  
 Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,  
 By night and lonely contemplation led  
 To linger in the gloomy walks of fate :

Hark, how the sacred calm, that breathes around,  
 Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease :  
 In still small accents whispering from the ground,  
 A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

No more with reason and thyself at strife,  
 Give anxious cares and endless wishes room ;  
 But through the cool sequester'd vale of life  
 Pursue the silent tenour of thy doom."

l. 85. to dumb forgetfulness a prey. The prey of death ;  
 that is, about to die.

l. 90. pious. In the sense of the Latin *pious*, meaning affectionate.

l. 91. Cf. note on line 43.

l. 93. For thee. Who is speaking now ? Does this change injure the unity ? Would the poem be better if it ended, as originally planned, with the stanzas quoted in the note on line 72 ?

l. 100. Here originally appeared the following stanza :—

"Him have we seen the greenwood side along,  
 While o'er the heath we hied, our labours done,  
 Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,  
 With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun."

"I rather wonder," says Mason, "that he rejected this stanza, as it not only has the same sort of Doric delicacy which charms us peculiarly in this part of the poem, but also completes the account of his whole day ; whereas, this evening scene being omitted, we have only his morning walk, and his noon-tide repose."

ll. 105-112. These two stanzas are inscribed on a monu-



ment erected to Gray's memory near the church at Stoke-Pogis.

l. 109. One morn I missed him on the customed hill. Gray himself heard the breezy call of incense-breathing morn. He was a lover of nature long before it was fashionable to admire wild and rugged scenery, lakes, waterfalls, and mountains. In 1739, fifty years in advance of the times, Gray said of the Alps, "Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry." And in 1769, one year before Wordsworth was born, he visited the English lakes alone, and wrote back to his friends in the true Wordsworthian style of glassy waters "reflecting rocks, woods, fields, and inverted tops of mountains," of lakes alive with breezes, and of the murmur at night of waterfalls inaudible by day.

l. 115. for thou canst read. The hoary-headed swain could not read.

l. 116. After this line was inserted, in the third edition, in March, 1751, the following stanza, which was withdrawn in 1753. Mason says the poet thought that it made too long a pause before the reading of the epitaph.

"There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,  
By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;  
The red-breast loves to build, and warble there,  
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

l. 119. science. Knowledge in general.

l. 128. bosom. In apposition with abode, line 126.

Select from the poem lines and stanzas which you would like to illustrate if you were an artist.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, whom Thackeray calls the most beloved of English writers, was born November 10, 1728, in the small village of Pallas, Longford county, Ireland. He was the son of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a poor clergyman, whose character is portrayed in Dr. Primrose of *The Vicar of Wakefield* and in the parson of *The Deserted Village*. At the age of eight he suffered a severe attack of smallpox and his face was greatly disfigured. In other respects, moreover, he was not at all prepossessing in appearance. After attending several schools at which he did not distinguish himself, he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1744. He assisted in paying his expenses by waiting on table and performing janitor services, but he was not greatly interested in his studies, and was neither contented nor successful. Once, however, he gained a prize of thirty shillings, and to celebrate the event invited a company of young people to his room for a dance, but his tutor suddenly appeared, drove out the dancers, and chastized Goldsmith. Deeply mortified, he ran away and nearly starved to death, but his brother Henry induced him to return, and he was graduated in 1749, the lowest on the list.

For two years after leaving college, Goldsmith was ostensibly fitting himself for church orders, but when he presented himself for ordination, because he did not fancy the clerical black, he dressed himself in scarlet breeches and was rejected. Next, he thought of emigrating to America, but the ship sailed without him while he was enjoying himself in the neighboring country. He went home penniless, but his uncle lent him fifty pounds to take him to London to study law. On the way he lost the money by gambling and was forced to return home. His friends next sent him to Edinburgh to study medicine. There for two years he remained until the desire for travel seized him, and he went abroad, ostensibly to study medicine, but really to ramble over Europe as a wandering minstrel.

On his return he lived in London which became his permanent home. He failed to make a living at practising medicine or teaching school and gradually engaged in hack work in literature. After writing his *Citizen of the World* (1760-1761), he made the acquaintance of Johnson and became a member of the famous Literary Club. He was recognized as one of the foremost poets of England on publishing *The Traveller* in 1764.

This date marks the change in his career. Hitherto his life had been a long and bitter struggle with poverty. He had scarcely been able to provide himself with the bare necessities of existence ; but from now on his financial difficulties arose, not from insufficient income, but from lack of thrift. He was greatly ridiculed by his utilitarian friends for his lack of common-sense. The needy, whether worthy or unworthy, never sought his

sympathy in vain. Taking no thought for the morrow he spent his last cent or went into debt if thereby he could relieve suffering. Even when a poor student in college he gave the blankets of his bed to a homeless woman who had five children. He had a childish love of bright colors and foolishly sought to redeem the deficiencies of his ill-favored person by arraying himself in suits of purple, velvet or other gorgeous finery.

His lack of practical ability is shown in a story told by Boswell. He says, Johnson one morning received a message that Goldsmith was in deep trouble and was about to be arrested for debt by his landlady. Johnson sent a guinea and as soon as he was dressed went at once to Goldsmith's room where he found that the guinea was already changed and that the impecunious author was about to indulge in a bottle of Madeira. Johnson thrust the cork into the bottle and asked Goldsmith if he knew of any means whereby he might be extricated from his unfortunate position. The latter mentioned a novel that was ready for the press. Johnson took the manuscript and, telling the landlady that he would soon return, sold it to a bookseller for sixty pounds. As Goldsmith discharged his rent he did not fail to scold his landlady roundly for having used him so ill.

The book which Johnson sold was *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which appeared in 1766. It is the first novel in English to present an attractive picture of home life; it has been translated into many languages and has probably done more than any of Goldsmith's other works to keep alive his fame. In 1770 *The Deserted*

*Village* appeared, and in 1773 the drama *She Stoops To Conquer*, his last important work. Goldsmith died on the 4th of April, 1774, and was mourned by the unfortunate and by all true lovers of literature.

In Goldsmith's *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning*, 1759, as well as in other writings, he acknowledged his allegiance to the classical school. In outward form his works followed classical models, but the spirit was romantic. He was a simple lover of nature and a champion of the oppressed poor. There was no seventeenth century satire in his treatment of the vices of men; on the other hand, his words pulsate with pity for the weak and erring. Although he maintained the intellectual dogmas of the classical school, he was unconsciously one of the important forces in the earlier years of the Romantic Movement.

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## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

AFTER ten years spent in composition and revision this poem was given to the public on May 26, 1770, in quarto form. "This day at twelve," announced *The Public Advertiser*, "will be published, price two shillings, *The Deserted Village*, a Poem by Dr. Goldsmith, Printed for W. Griffin, at Garrick's Head in Catherine Street, Strand." The immediate success that attended the publication was no doubt due partly to the didactic and moralizing tone which then was in accordance with the popular taste. Five editions were called for within a year. Goldsmith's object was to set forth the evils that result from the rise of luxury and the decay of the peasantry. The poem is valued to-day, not for any economic theories it presents, but because of its pastoral atmosphere, its sympathy with human suffering and enjoyment, and its touching simplicity.

## DEDICATION

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR,

I can have no expectations in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never

paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this Poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to enquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and enquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an enquiry, whether the country be depopulating, or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue

to think those luxuries prejudicial to states, by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.

I am, Dear Sir,  
Your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,  
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

## THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN° ! loveliest village of the plain ;  
 Where health and plenty cheer'd the labouring swain,  
 Where smiling spring° its earliest visit paid,  
 And parting° summer's lingering blooms delay'd :  
 Dear lovely bowers° of innocence and ease, 5  
 Seats of my youth,° when every sport could please,  
 How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,°  
 Where humble happiness endear'd each scene !  
 How often have I paus'd on every charm,  
 The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm, 10  
 The never-failing brook, the busy mill,  
 The decent° church that topt the neighbouring hill,°  
 The hawthorn° bush, with seats beneath the shade  
 For talking age and whispering lovers made !  
 How often have I blest the coming day,° 15  
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,  
 And all the village train,° from labour free,  
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,



While many a pastime circled in the shade,  
The young contending as the old survey'd ; 20  
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,  
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.  
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,  
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd ;  
The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25  
By holding out to tire each other down ;  
The swain mistrustless of his smutt'd face,  
While secret laughter titter'd° round the place ;  
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love, 29  
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.  
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,  
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please :  
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed :  
These were thy charms, but all these charms are fled.  
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;  
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand° is seen,  
And desolation saddens all thy green :  
One only master grasps the whole domain,  
And half a tillage° stints thy smiling plain. 40  
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,  
But, chok'd with sedges,° works its weedy way ;  
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,  
The hollow-sounding bittern° guards its nest ;  
Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies, 45  
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;  
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,  
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;  
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,  
Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay ;  
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;  
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made :  
 But a bold peasantry,° their country's pride, 55  
 When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
 When every rood° of ground maintain'd its man ;  
 For him light labour spread her wholesome store,  
 Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more : 60  
 His best companions, innocence and health ;  
 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.°

But times are alter'd ; trade's unfeeling train  
 Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;  
 Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose, 65  
 Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,°  
 And every want to opulence allied,  
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.  
 These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,  
 Those calm desires that ask'd but little room, 70  
 Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,  
 Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green ;  
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,  
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour, 75  
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.  
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds  
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,  
 And, many a year elaps'd, return to view  
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80  
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,  
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings<sup>o</sup> round this world of care,  
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —  
I still had hopes,<sup>o</sup> my latest hours to crown, 85  
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;  
To husband out life's taper at the close,  
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:  
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,  
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill, 90  
Around my fire an evening group to draw,  
And tell of all I felt,<sup>o</sup> and all I saw;  
And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue  
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,  
I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95  
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,  
Retreats from care, that never must<sup>o</sup> be mine,  
How happy he who crowns in shades like these .  
A youth of labour with an age of ease; 100  
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,  
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!  
For him no wretches,<sup>o</sup> born to work and weep,  
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;  
No surly porter stands in guilty<sup>o</sup> state, 105  
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;  
But on he moves to meet his latter end,  
Angels around befriending virtue's friend,<sup>o</sup>  
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,  
While resignation<sup>o</sup> gently slopes the way; 110  
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,  
His heaven commences ere the world be past!

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close  
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.

There, as I passed with careless steps and slow, 115  
The mingling notes came soften'd from below ;  
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,  
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young,  
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,  
The playful children just let loose from school, 120  
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,  
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —  
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,  
And fill'd each pause the nightingale° had made.  
But now the sounds of population fail, 125  
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,°  
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,  
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.  
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,  
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring : 130  
She, wretched maiden, forc'd in age, for bread,  
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,  
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,  
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;  
She only left of all the harmless train, 135  
The sad historian of the pensive plain !  
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,  
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild ;  
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,  
The village preacher's° modest mansion rose. 140  
A man he was to all the country dear,  
And passing rich with forty pounds a year° ;  
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change his place ;  
Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power, 145  
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour ;

Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,  
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.  
His house was known to all the vagrant train;  
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain: 150  
The long remember'd beggar<sup>o</sup> was his guest,  
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;  
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,  
Claim'd kindred<sup>o</sup> there, and had his claims allow'd;  
The broken soldier,<sup>o</sup> kindly bade to stay, 155  
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away,  
Wept o'er his wounds or, tales of sorrow done,  
Shoulder'd his crutch and show'd how fields were won.  
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,  
And quite forgot their vices in their woe; 160  
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,  
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,  
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side<sup>o</sup>;  
But in his duty prompt at every call, 165  
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all;  
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries  
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,  
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,  
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,  
The reverend champion stood; at his control  
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;  
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise 175  
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,  
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;

Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,  
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray. 180  
The service past, around the pious man,  
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;  
Even children follow'd with endearing wile,  
And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.  
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest ; 185  
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress :  
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven :  
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form, 189  
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,  
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,  
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule, 195  
The village master<sup>o</sup> taught his little school.  
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;  
I knew him well, and every truant knew :  
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace  
The day's disasters in his morning face ; 200  
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee  
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;  
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,  
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.  
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught, 205  
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;  
The village all declar'd how much he knew :  
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too ;  
Lands he could measure, terms and tides<sup>o</sup> presage,  
And even the story ran that he could gauge : 210

In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,  
For, even tho' vanquish'd, he could argue still;  
While words of learned length and thundering sound  
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;  
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew, 215  
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame; the very spot  
Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.  
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,  
Where once the sign-post<sup>o</sup> caught the passing eye, 220  
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,  
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,  
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,  
And news much older than their ale went round.

Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225  
The parlour splendours of that festive place:  
The white-wash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,  
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;  
The chest contriv'd a double debt to pay,  
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day; 230  
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,<sup>o</sup>  
The twelve good rules,<sup>o</sup> the royal game of goose<sup>o</sup>;  
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,  
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;  
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show, 235  
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain transitory splendours! could not all  
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?  
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart  
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.<sup>o</sup> 240  
Thither no more the peasant shall repair  
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;



No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,  
No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail ;  
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245  
Relax his ponderous strength,<sup>o</sup> and lean to hear ;  
The host himself no longer shall be found  
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;  
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,  
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,  
These simple blessings of the lowly train ;  
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,  
One native charm,<sup>o</sup> than all the gloss of art ;  
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play, 255  
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;  
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,  
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.  
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,  
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd — 260  
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,  
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;  
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,  
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey 265  
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,<sup>o</sup>  
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand  
Between a splendid and an happy land.  
Proud swells the tide<sup>o</sup> with loads of freighted ore,  
And shouting folly hails them from her shore ; 270  
Hoards even beyond the miser's wish abound,  
And rich men flock from all the world around ;  
Yet count our gains ; this wealth is but a name  
That leaves our useful products still the same.



Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275  
Takes up a space that many poor supplied°;  
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,  
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :  
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth  
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth ;  
His seat, where solitary sports are seen, 281  
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green :  
Around the world each needful product flies,  
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;  
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all 285  
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorn'd and plain,  
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,  
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,  
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ; 290  
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,  
When time advances, and when lovers fail,  
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,  
In all the glaring impotence of dress,  
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd : 295  
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd,  
But verging to decline, its splendours rise ;  
Its vistas strike,° its palaces surprise :  
While, scourg'd by famine from the smiling land,  
The mournful peasant leads his humble band, 300  
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,  
The country blooms — a garden, and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,  
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?  
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd 305  
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,

Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,  
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there?  
To see profusion that he must not share; 310  
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd  
To pamper luxury and thin mankind;  
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know  
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.  
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315  
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;  
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,  
There, the black gibbet° glooms beside the way.  
The dome° where pleasure holds her midnight reign  
Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train: 320  
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,  
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.  
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!  
Sure these denote one universal joy! 324  
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes  
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.  
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,  
Has wept at tales of innocence distress;  
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,  
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn: 330  
Now lost to all, — her friends, her virtue fled, —  
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,  
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,  
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,  
When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335  
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine the loveliest train, —  
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?

Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,  
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread. 340

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene  
Where half the convex world intrudes between,  
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,  
Where wild Altama<sup>o</sup> murmurs to their woe.  
Far different there from all that charm'd before 345  
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;  
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,  
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;  
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,  
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 350  
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,  
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;  
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake  
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;  
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355  
And savage men more murderous still than they ;  
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,  
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.  
Far different these from every former scene,  
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360  
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,  
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! What sorrows gloom'd that parting  
day,  
That call'd them from their native walks away ;  
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365  
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their  
last,  
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain  
For seats like these beyond the western main,

- And shuddering still to face the distant deep,  
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep. 370  
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go  
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;  
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,  
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.  
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375  
The fond companion of his helpless years,  
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,  
And left a lover's for a father's arms.  
With louder complaints the mother spoke her woes,  
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose, 380  
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,  
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear,  
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief  
In all the silent manliness of grief.
- O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385  
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee !  
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,  
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy !  
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,  
Boast of a florid vigour not their own. 390  
At every draught more large and large they grow,  
A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe ;  
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,  
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
- Even now the devastation is begun, 395  
And half the business of destruction done ;  
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,  
I see the rural virtues leave the land.  
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads° the sail,  
That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400

Downward they move, a melancholy band,  
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.  
Contented toil, and hospitable care,  
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;  
And piety with wishes plac'd above, 405  
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.  
And thou, sweet poetry, thou loveliest maid,  
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;  
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame  
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410  
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,  
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;  
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,<sup>o</sup>  
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;  
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415  
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !  
Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,  
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,<sup>o</sup>  
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,  
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420  
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,  
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime ;  
Aid slighted truth<sup>o</sup> with thy persuasive strain ;  
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;  
Teach him, that states of native strength possess, 425  
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest ;  
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,<sup>o</sup>  
As ocean sweeps the labour'd mole away ;  
While self-dependent power can time defy,  
As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

## NOTES

1. 1. **Auburn.** This name was suggested to Goldsmith by his friend Langton. The place seems to be entirely imaginary, although Lissoy, a hamlet in the central part of Ireland, resembled in many respects the village described in the poem. The ruins of the house in which Goldsmith's father lived at Lissoy remained for many years an object of interest.

1. 3. **smiling spring, etc.** Many poets have expressed such a wish concerning localities that have been associated with the joys and sorrows of youth. Burns wrote of the region about Montgomery Castle, where he took his last farewell of Highland Mary, "There simmer first unfauld her robes, and there the longest tarry."

1. 4. **parting.** Departing.

1. 5. **bowers.** Goldsmith uses the word often in the sense of a rustic cottage or a home. Cooke, a contemporary of Goldsmith, says that lines 5-15 constituted Goldsmith's second morning's work. It was the poet's method to write out in prose the ideas that occurred to him and later to versify them and revise. Ten lines of poetry he considered a good day's labor. Goldsmith worked on the poem more or less steadily for two years before it was published.

1. 6. **Seats of my youth.** The abode or dwelling-place of my boyhood. The Rev. Charles Goldsmith removed to Lissoy when his son, Oliver, was but two years of age. The boy continued to reside in the outskirts of that village until he began to prepare for the university.

l. 7. **green.** The word is still in use in some villages of New England and New York as the name for a public playground or park.

l. 12. **decent.** Comely. Goldsmith used many words in a sense that preserved the meaning of the original Latin. Such was the practice of the English classical school of poets whose diction Goldsmith followed closely. Notice among other words the poet's use of secure, fluctuate, seats, train, and participate.

l. 12. **church that topt the neighbouring hill.** The custom of placing churches on the tops of hills was carried to an extreme in the early days of New England.

l. 13. **hawthorn.** The corresponding tree in America is called the thornapple.

l. 15. **the coming day.** A holiday.

l. 17. **train.** The word means practically a procession of people. Goldsmith liked the word because it helps to suggest to the reader the picture of the long-drawn line of villagers as they entered upon the green. In this connection notice "led up" and "circled" in the following lines. There are few passages in English poetry more picturesque than this.

l. 28. **tittered.** Goldsmith is not content with bringing pictures before the readers' eyes. He also seeks for words that suggest auditory images. Notice lines 44, 46, 113-126, etc.

l. 37. **the tyrant's hand.** General Robert Napier returned from Spain, where he had made a fortune, and purchased estates near Lissoy until he had a domain nine miles in circumference. This he enclosed, expelling therefrom many peasants who formerly had been tenants upon the land. Unable to secure a proper maintenance the former tenants rose, on the death of the general, and pillaged the

estate. It is possible that Goldsmith had this particular case in mind, but unfortunately such evictions were not rare at this time even in England.

l. 40. **half a tillage.** Part of the land had been set aside as a game preserve and the remainder was not so carefully tilled as when it was divided into small portions, each cultivated by a tenant for his own profit.

l. 42. **choked with sedges.** What changed the brook? Had the tyrant constructed a lake or a retreat for his game? Or had the stream choked from neglect after the mill was closed?

l. 44. **hollow-sounding bittern.** In his *History of Animated Nature* Goldsmith wrote as follows:—

“Those who walked in an evening by the sedgy sides of unfrequented rivers must remember a variety of notes from different waterfowl: the loud scream of the wild goose, the croaking of the mallard, the whining of the lapwing, and the tremulous neighing of the jacksnipe. But of all those sounds there is none so dismally hollow as the booming of the bittern. It is impossible for words to give those who have not heard this evening-call an adequate idea of its solemnity. It is like the interrupted bellowing of a bull, but hollower and louder, and is heard at a mile’s distance, as if issuing from some formidable being that resided at the bottom of its waters.

“I remember in the place where I was a boy with what terror this bird’s note affected the whole village; they considered it as the presage of some sad event, and generally found or made one to succeed it.”

The presence of the waterfowl is given by Goldsmith as evidence of charms withdrawn. Evidence of a decreased population it certainly is, but Wordsworth and Byron a few



years later would have found the scene no less charming than if the mill were still busily humming and the laughter re-echoing. To be sure Goldsmith's theme now is not the beauties of nature, but rather the welfare of the state; and no one can deny that a population of thrifty peasants is better for the state than a population of bitterns. Nevertheless, Goldsmith's use of these details as instances of departed charms is evidence to us that his love for nature is not romantic, but is such as was characteristic of the classical school. Macaulay says in his *History of England*, Chapter XIII., "Goldsmith was one of the very few Saxons who, more than a century ago, ventured to explore the Highlands. He was disgusted by the hideous wilderness, and declared that he greatly preferred the charming country round Leyden, the vast expanse of verdant meadow, and the villas with their statues and grottos, trim flower beds and rectilinear avenues."

l. 55. **But a bold peasantry**, etc. Could thrifty settlers and immigrants fill the place which Goldsmith conceives as occupied by the bold peasantry?

l. 58. **rood**. The fourth part of an acre.

l. 62. **ignorance of wealth**. Then the laborer's parish was practically his prison. If he wandered away and required temporary assistance, he was returned to his home. Few laborers could read. The modern workingman obviously cannot avail himself of the poet's "best riches."

l. 66. **Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose**. The use of such personified abstractions as wealth and pomp is another practice that Goldsmith inherited from the classical poets. Cf. also l. 3, spring; l. 16, toil; l. 59, labour; l. 61, innocence; l. 63, trade; l. 68, folly, etc. Notice also how prone such a style is to pass into absurdity as in lines 69-73, where the gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom are said to seek

a kinder shore. Let us be careful, nevertheless, not to regard Goldsmith as a classical poet merely because many of the external characteristics of his style are classical; the spirit of his poetry is romantic. The object of *The Deserted Village* is to depict the happy life of the simple villagers and to defend the poor and weak from the oppression of the rich and powerful.

l. 83. *wanderings*. No doubt Goldsmith had in mind his pedestrian trip through Europe and those pitiful early days in London.

l. 85. *I still had hopes*. Still does not mean yet, but is used in the older sense of "continually," "all the while." The second repetition of *I still had hopes* brings the paragraph to a conclusion in a climax.

l. 92. *I felt*. These verses are alive with personal feeling of a sort unknown to the work of Pope and Dryden. The memory of his boyhood scenes and friends had been through Goldsmith's life a perpetual benediction. He wrote of his individual experiences and hopes, but with so sincere feeling that his lines seem to express for all readers the eternal pathos of lost youth and the long ago.

l. 98. *must*. Instead of *can*, because the village was destroyed in accordance with the will of "the tyrant" and not by accident.

l. 103. *wretches*. Goldsmith seems to condemn trade in general and to believe that laborers should engage only in agricultural pursuits. The poet might well have been allied with Sir Roger de Coverly in his famous argument with Sir Andrew. See the *Spectator*, No. 174.

l. 105. *guilty*. This word certainly suggests democratic principles.

l. 108. *Angels around befriending virtue's friend*. When

Goldsmith died, not angels, but the afflicted, the infirm, and the needy, men and women, poor objects of his charity hung weeping about the stairs to his apartment.

l. 110. *resignation.* Sir Joshua Reynolds in appreciation of the poet's compliment in dedicating to him *The Deserted Village*, painted a picture founded on this passage. He named it *Resignation* and dedicated an engraving of the painting to Goldsmith.

l. 126. *No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale.* Matthew Arnold says of this line: "There is exactly the poetic diction of our prose century: rhetorical, ornate, and, poetically, quite false."

l. 140. *The village preacher.* In speaking of the death of the poet's brother Henry, Irving says: "To the tender and melancholy recollections of his early days awakened by the death of this loved companion of his childhood we may attribute some of the most heartfelt passages in *The Deserted Village*. Much of that poem we are told was composed this summer, in the course of solitary strolls about the green lanes and beautifully rural scenes of the neighborhood; and thus much of the softness and sweetness of English landscape became blended with the ruder features of Lissoy. It was in these lonely and subdued moments, when tender regret was half mingled with self-upbraiding, that he poured forth the homage of the heart rendered as it were at the grave of his brother. The picture of the village pastor in this poem, which, we have already hinted, was taken in part from the character of his father, embodied likewise the recollections of his brother Henry; for the natures of the father and son seem to have been identical."

l. 142. *passing rich with forty pounds a year.* Passing means surpassingly. This was Henry Goldsmith's income,

and it was certainly much larger than that of most of the peasantry. We can therefore form an estimate of the "plenty" amid which the peasants lived. The charms of Auburn, as recalled by the poet, were due to pleasures other than those of luxury.

l. 151. **The long-remembered beggar.** Often remembered with alms.

l. 154. **Claimed kindred.** Was he a cousin or some relative? Is not kindred used in another sense?

l. 155. **The broken soldier.** Broken in health.

l. 158. **Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.** One of the most picturesque lines.

l. 164. **And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side.** So did the poet's; and one of these failings with which he was charged was that he quite forgot other men's failings in their woes.

l. 196. **The village master.** This is thought to refer to Thomas Byrne, who became Goldsmith's teacher when the boy was six years of age. Byrne had served abroad in the wars of Queen Anne's time and had a great many stories to tell of his adventures in Spain. He was moreover of a romantic turn of mind, and like Ichabod Crane was exceedingly superstitious. Under his tuition Goldsmith became deeply versed in fairy tales. Also from this master, Goldsmith caught a disposition to write poetry. Some of the verses that he wrote on scraps of paper his mother read with delight, and concluded, while he was yet of tender years, that her son was to be a genius and a poet.

l. 209. **terms and tides.** This refers to the calendars of churches, schools, and courts.

l. 220. **sign-post.** The name and symbol of an inn was often affixed to a post beside the highway. Cf. *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Spectator*, No. 122.

1. 231. **use.** Perhaps they were used to cover holes in the wall.

1. 232. **The twelve good rules.** These were found in most inns, and according to Goldsmith were originally framed by Charles I. They were as follows: 1. Urge no healths; 2. Profane no divine ordinances; 3. Touch no state matters; 4. Reveal no secrets; 5. Pick no quarrels; 6. Make no comparisons; 7. Maintain no ill opinions; 8. Keep no bad company; 9. Encourage no vice; 10. Make no long meals; 11. Repeat no grievances; 12. Lay no wagers.

1. 232. **The royal game of goose.** A popular game played with dice over a board on which was a representation of a goose.

1. 246. **Relax his ponderous strength.** Note how the movement of the verse is in harmony with the idea?

1. 254. **One native charm.** Like Rousseau, he seems to wish for a return to nature and the simple life.

1. 266. **The rich man's power increase, the poor's decay.** What is the tendency to-day? Goldsmith was wrong as regards his own time.

1. 269. **Proud swells the tide.** "The idea apparently is that while more money comes into the country, it is received in return for necessities, some of which are needed for home use. As the money thus obtained goes to increase the luxury of the rich, it does not add to the substantial prosperity of the community as a whole. The actual product of the necessities of life remain the same; and the rich man uses his superabundant wealth to encroach on the lands that once supplied the needs of the poor." — **PANCOAST.**

1. 276. **Takes up a place that many poor supplied.** "It is a melancholy thing to stand alone in one's country," said the Lord Leicester who built Holkham, when com-

plimented on the completion of that princely dwelling. "I look around—not a house is to be seen but mine. I am the giant of Giantcastle, and I have eat up all my neighbors." — FORSTER.

l. 298. Its vistas strike. The landscape gardener has secured beautiful effects on the rich man's estate.

l. 318. the black gibbet. They had to steal to live.

l. 319. dome. Here it means house or palace.

l. 344. wild Altama. The Altamaha River in Georgia. In the following passage, certainly, Goldsmith does not present a romantic view of the emigrant's lot. We should have thought, in spite of the poet's classical training, that the strangeness, the luxuriance, and the mystery of the New World would have found some expression in his verse. Cf. Tennyson's description in *Enoch Arden* of a tropical isle:—

"The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns  
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,  
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
That coiled around the stately stems, and ran  
Even to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world

The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees that branched  
And blossomed in the zenith,

The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts,  
Among the palms and ferns, and precipices;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east;  
The blaze upon his island overhead;  
The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,  
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
The scarlet shafts of sunrise."

l. 399. **Where yon anchoring vessel spreads.** Goldsmith doubtless had in mind one of his own experiences when he wrote of the emigrants and penned these lines.

l. 413. **Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe.** Forster says Goldsmith once remarked to a friend: "I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail muses, they would let me starve; but by other labors I can make shift to eat and drink and have good clothes." Goldsmith never flattered a patron in order to secure material advantage from his poetry.

l. 418. **Torno's cliffs or Pambamarca's side.** Lake Tarnea is in the northern part of Sweden. Pambamarca is a peak of the Andes near Quito.

l. 423. **Aid slighted truth.** Goldsmith's verse never failed to do that. His attitude toward society was romantic, although his tendency to moralize was classical.

l. 427. Boswell says that the last four lines were added by Johnson, who thought that the poem as completed by Goldsmith ended too tamely. Is *The Deserted Village* merely a rimed essay, or is it a real poem?

# CANTO FOUR OF CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE AND THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

GEORGE GORDON BYRON

## THE LIFE OF BYRON

BYRON is the most picturesque figure in the history of English literature. If he had written nothing, and his life and character had been portrayed by some Boswell, he would still be famous. His long-continued struggle against foes without and within occupied the attention of Europe for years. Many detested him, some idolized him, but all observed him and were interested in his fate. His proud and scornful spirit failed in the fight against tremendous odds, but it did not yield.

He was, perhaps, the supreme egotist of all time. It is difficult to tell when, if ever, he is sincere, or when he is posing. He may have been the worst of men or he may have sought the public eye by appearing to be the worst of men. His characteristic despair may have been real or it may have been theatrical. Although he resented adverse criticism as has no other author, critical attention of some sort he craved. He placed his own character under thin disguises as the hero of each of his longer poems, and he sought to fashion his life



into a romantic tale. His own individual will he opposed against the precedent, convention, and authority of society as long as he lived; except for physical bravery there seemed to be no self-renunciation in his nature.

Such individuality was his, yet he seemed to be the product of his time and the spokesman of his age. He lived in a period of revolution and revolt. Fifty years before Byron, Rousseau had produced works which had thrown Europe into turmoil. The French Revolution had made a new France and in almost every country of Europe there were changes scarcely less momentous, although not always so evident. Governments were becoming democratic, and hereditary rank and aristocratic pretention were losing their authority. In education and religion practices and beliefs that had been in use for centuries were being thrown aside. Society itself was losing its authority because of the magnified liberty, and even license, which was accorded the individual. This fact adds significance to M. Scherer's saying that Byron "has treated hardly any subject but one — himself; he posed all his life long." This is true in the sense that the consideration of the individual, as distinguished from the member of society, reached a climax in the time of Byron, and he was the chief exponent and spokesman of his age. He was no prophet; perhaps he even lagged behind the true art of his time. What was subtle escaped him. But to-day one who would through poetry enter into the life of the early nineteenth century must read his works. As a mirror of the times his poetry has no rivals.

Byron came of a famous family which in its later years had not borne a good reputation. The poet's father,

John Byron, was a captain of the Guards, and was dissipated and worthless. He eloped with the wife of the Marquis of Carmorthen and married her after she had secured a divorce from her husband. Of this marriage was born Augusta, the poet's half-sister. In 1785 John Byron married Miss Catherine Gordon, probably to gain her fortune, for he ill-treated his bride and deserted her soon after the birth of the poet, in 1788. Byron's mother, however, was herself erratic and passionate. She quarrelled with her son continually. Because of his club-foot she called him a lame brat and threw the fire-shovel and tongs at his head. But even at this age Byron did not tamely submit. When he was scolded for soiling a new frock, he tore the garment from top to bottom.

When Byron was an infant his mother removed from London to Scotland. There he attended school until, in 1798, through the death of a cousin, he inherited the estate of Newstead Abbey and the title of lord. In 1801 he was sent to Harrow, where he remained for four years. The young lord objected to the discipline of the school and was an indifferent student, but was an omnivorous reader. He formed warm friendships and was not at all averse to using his fists in defence of friends if he thought them ill-treated. Once while yet a small boy he approached an upper classman and offered to take half the beating which the big fellow was about to inflict on the little Peel. He gave much attention to athletic sports, especially to swimming, rowing, and boxing, and he became a leader among the boys.

In 1805, Byron went to Cambridge University, from which he was graduated in 1808. As at Harrow he

gave far more attention to athletics and social pleasures than to study. If we may believe his own story, he engaged in some dissipation. Nevertheless, he devoted considerable time to poetry. In 1806 he prepared a volume of poems which was privately printed and was circulated among his friends. In March, 1807, appeared *Hours of Idleness*. The inoffensive little volume was criticised with unnecessary harshness by the *Edinburgh Review*. Byron, who was a professed admirer of Pope, replied by writing, in 1809, a poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, fashioned after the manner of the *Dunciad*. Its satire is the most unkindly and unjust in the English language. In it he maligned all the prominent English writers, good and bad alike.

About the time of the publication of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* Byron took his seat in the House of Lords, but soon, becoming weary of politics, he went with his college friend, Hobhouse, for a trip on the continent.

On his return to London, *Childe Harold* was published, and in rapid succession there followed before 1816 *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, *Hebrew Melodies*, *The Siege of Corinth*, and *Parisinia*. While he wrote he was engaged in a round of social pleasures. He became the lion of London society; his manner, his dress, even his melancholy was imitated.

After a series of love affairs that had been continuous from the age of fourteen, Byron, on January 2, 1815, was married to Miss Milbanke, an heiress. In December of the same year a daughter, Augusta Ada was born, and the next spring Byron left his family and country

forever. He was accused of the greatest immorality, but it is doubtful whether or not he was guilty. Byron, however, made little attempt to defend himself; and, indeed, at this time, as frequently in his life, seemed to enjoy shocking the moral people of England by hinting that his character was a great deal worse than it really was. Byron travelled through Belgium and Switzerland. He crossed into Italy and took up his residence in Venice. He wrote *Manfred* and *Beppo*, and began *Don Juan*. The poet was associated at this time with the Countess Guiccioli and a company of revolutionists who were working to secure independence for Italy. In his poem *The Prophecy of Dante* he presented a vision of a free and united Italian nation. The consequent suspicions of the Austrian government caused him and his companions to move from city to city. Nevertheless, while he remained in Italy he wrote the famous satire, *The Vision of Judgment*; the plays, *Marino Faliero*, *The Two Foscari*, *Sardanapalus*, and *Cain*; and he completed sixteen cantos of his unfinished masterpiece *Don Juan*. This poem sets the whole world at defiance. It not only ridicules superstition and sham, but with unrestrained license attacks the conventions of society. It destroys one thing after another that civilization has sanctioned, and leaves existing only Byron himself, the Apostle of Revolt, standing in the midst of the ruin he has made. Nevertheless, the satire is at times interspersed with rare beauties, like wild flowers springing up in the haunts of the Yahoos. Some of the descriptive and lyrical passages are almost unequalled in tenderness and pathos.

With *Don Juan* Byron's career as poet was practically

ended, but he was yet to live the noblest part of his life. In April, 1823, he became connected with an English committee which was seeking to assist Greece in her struggle for independence. He offered freely his services and his money. In July he sailed from Genoa and after remaining for some time on the island of Cephalonia awaiting orders, he reëmbarked and was nearly captured by a Turkish frigate. On the 5th of January, 1824, he landed at Missolonghi, where he met with a most enthusiastic reception. Salutes were fired. The whole populace came out to welcome him, and he was conducted to his headquarters by the prince and the dignitaries of the place. Byron, however, soon discovered that the enthusiasm was but an outward show, and that disorder, dissention, and intrigue were prevalent. Nevertheless, he courageously planned to lead an expedition against Lepanto, the Turkish stronghold. On February 14, although he was ill, he manifested his characteristic firmness and self-possession by quelling an uprising of Suliotes. Early in April at Missolonghi he caught a severe cold which soon gave place to fever. He was without proper care or medical attendance and the end drew near. In his delirium, fancying that he was leading his troops against Lepanto, he cried, "Forward! forward! follow me!" On the 19th of April he died. When the body of the hero and poet arrived in England, interment in Westminster Abbey was refused, and he was buried in the family vault at Hucknall.

We may in part condemn his conduct and his principles, but we must admit that he helped to rid the world of abuses. As poet, as apostle of revolt, as hero, he is entitled to be called a great man.

The poetry of Pope is not to-day appreciated as it was in his own time, for we regard it as excessively classical. It seems to us that the poetic art of that time had departed so far from human life and feeling that it had become artificial, and that genuine poetry was not again produced until the standards of poetic art had been modified by the influence of the Romantic Movement. In like manner Byron's poetry marks the crest of the wave of the Romantic Movement itself and is excessively Romantic. Poetry and criticism since his time have become less anarchistic and more constructive. As the poet of revolt Byron helped to rid the world of many abuses, but to-day revolution is not a dominant characteristic of society, and his vigorous poems of protest have lost much of their power. We need to yield, however, little or none of the charm and beauty of his lyric and descriptive passages, for they are founded, not on a transient condition of society, but on universal and permanent characteristics of nature and the human heart.

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## CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

ON July 2, 1809, Byron, with his friend Hobhouse and three attendants, sailed from Falmouth, England, for Lisbon. The poet had made extensive preparations for a long absence and had planned to visit Persia and India. They rode through Spain, and at Cadiz took ship for Malta. They then sailed to Previsa, and began a journey through Albania. At Janina *Childe Harold* was begun. They passed on through Greece, and at Smyrna in March, 1810, the second canto of *Childe Harold* was completed. After spending some time in Constantinople and Athens, Byron returned to England in July, 1811.

On his return, his friend, Dallas, the author, asked Byron what he had written while abroad. Byron displayed the manuscript of *Hints from Horace*. Dallas examined the poem and expressed his disapproval. "Have you no other result of your travels," he asked. "A few short pieces and a lot of Spenserian stanzas not worth troubling you with," the poet replied, "but you are welcome to them." The Spenserian stanzas proved to be *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Mr. Dallas was enthusiastic in his praise of the latter, but Byron preferred the *Hints from Horace*, a poem which was not published until after his death and might better have

been destroyed. While *Childe Harold* was in press Byron revised the poem, and in correspondence with his lawyers deprecated any identification of himself and his hero, although he had first called him Childe Byron.

On the 29th of February, 1812, the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold* appeared and secured immediate and remarkable popularity. Byron said, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." Its success was largely due to the fact that it was suited to the public of that time. It was sentimental; it contained the confidences of a somewhat melancholy hero; it criticized existing institutions in gentle satire; it expressed mainly ideas that the Romantic Movement had made familiar, although a few years before they would have been considered startling. The two cantos that were published later were, mainly because of the influence of Wordsworth, vastly better; but had they been published before Byron became famous it is doubtful whether they would have secured a great degree of popular favor.

When Byron separated from his wife and child on the 25th of April, 1816, he embarked for Ostend, and began the journey which became the basis for the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold*. He passed through Belgium and spent some days at Brussels. He visited the field of Waterloo. He went up the Rhine and passed into Switzerland where for some time he enjoyed the companionship of Shelley. There at Ouchy, in June, 1816, he finished the third canto of *Childe Harold*, and it was published in November, 1816.

In the fall of 1816 he set out with Hobhouse for Italy. He visited Milan, Verona, Arqua, Ferrara, Florence, Venice, and Rome. The fourth canto of



*Childe Harold* was begun on June 26, 1817, was finished in September, 1817, and was published in April with a dedicatory letter addressed to Hobhouse. The fourth canto is very different from the first and second cantos. The satire has become milder, the verse more melodious, and the style in general more polished. In particular, nature, as the result of the direct or indirect influence of Wordsworth, is viewed with a spiritualized sympathy hitherto rare in the poet's work. And in addition sympathy with human suffering, always characteristic of Byron's poetry, here appears at its best. Even the poet's personality, ever in the foreground in his verse, here abandons its controversial attitude and assumes an appreciative and reflective mood in harmony with the famous and beautiful scenes that are visited. In the fourth canto, there is little posing. Through it, there breathes a spirit of genuineness, and his verse founded on the realities of human passion, possesses in the main that sincere and happy style which is the essence of true poetry.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND CANTOS OF CHILDE HAROLD

THE following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions. The scenes attempted to be sketched are in Spain, Portugal, Epirus,

Acarnania, and Greece. There, for the present, the poem stops; its reception will determine whether the author may venture to conduct his readers to the capital of the East, through Ionia and Phrygia: these two cantos are merely experimental.

A fictitious character is introduced for the sake of giving some connection to the piece; which, however, makes no pretension to regularity. It has been suggested to me by friends, on whose opinions I set a high value, that in this fictitious character, "Childe Harold," I may incur the suspicion of having intended some real personage: this I beg leave, once for all, to disclaim; Harold is the child of imagination, for the purpose I have stated. In some very trivial particulars, and those merely local, there might be grounds for such a notion; but in the main points, I should hope none whatever.

It is almost superfluous to mention that the appellation "Childe," as "Childe Waters," "Childe Childers," etc., is used as more consonant with the old structure of versification which I have adopted. The "Good Night," in the beginning of the first canto, was suggested by *Lord Maxwell's Good Night in the Border Minstrelsy*, edited by Mr. Scott.

With the different poems which have been published on Spanish subjects, there may be found some slight coincidence in the first part, which treats of the Peninsula, but it can only be casual; as, with the exception of a few concluding stanzas, the whole of this poem was written in the Levant.

The stanza of Spenser, according to one of our most successful poets, admits of every variety. Dr. Beattie

makes the following observation : "Not long ago, I began a poem in the style and stanza of Spenser, in which I propose to give full scope to my inclination, and be either droll or pathetic, descriptive or sentimental, tender or satirical, as the humour strikes me ; for, if I mistake not, the measure which I have adopted admits equally of all these kinds of composition." Strengthened in my opinion by such authority, and by the example of some in the highest order of Italian poets, I shall make no apology for attempts at similar variations in the following composition ; satisfied that if they are unsuccessful, their failure must be in the execution, rather than in the design, sanctioned by the practice of Ariosto, Thomson, and Beattie.

LONDON, February, 1812.

## DEDICATORY EPISTLE ADDRESSED TO HOBHOUSE

"TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, Esq., A.M., F.R.S., etc.

"VENICE, January 2, 1818.

"MY DEAR HOBHOUSE : — After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last cantos of *Childe Harold*, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better, — to one who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship than — though not ungrateful — I can, or could be, to *Childe Harold*, for any public favor reflected through

the poem or the poet, — to one whom I have known long and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful over my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril, — to a friend often tried and never found wanting, — to yourself.

“In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth; and in dedicating to you in its complete, or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years’ intimacy with a man of learning, of talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for minds like ours to give or to receive flattery; yet the praises of sincerity have ever been permitted to the voice of friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of good-will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the anniversary of the most unfortunate day of my existence, but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship, and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience without thinking better of his species and of himself.

“It has been our fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of chivalry, history, and fable,

—Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were to us a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be a pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that events could have left me for imaginary objects.

“With regard to the conduct of the last canto, there will be found less of the pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the author speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith’s *Citizen of the World*, whom nobody would believe to be a Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition that I determined to abandon it altogether—and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject are *now* a matter of indifference; the work is to depend on itself, and not on the writer;

and the author, who has no resources in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of authors.

“In the course of the following canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflection; and for the whole of the notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

“It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us—though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode—to distrust, or at least defer our judgment, and more narrowly examine our information. The state of literary, as well as political party, appears to run, or to *have* run, so high that for a stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language: ‘*Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l’ antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essere la prima.*’ Italy has great names still, — Canova, Monti, Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti, Morelli, Cicognara, Albrizzi Mezzophanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca, will secure to the present



generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres; and in some the very highest: Europe — the World — has but one Canova.

“It has been somewhere said by Alfieri that ‘*La pianta uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra, e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova.*’ Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their neighbours, — that man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their genius, their sense of beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched ‘longing after immortality,’ — the immortality of independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the labourers’ chorus, ‘*Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma non è più come era prima,*’ it was difficult not to contrast this melancholy dirge with the bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns over the carnage of Mont St. Jean, and the betrayal of Genoa, of Italy, of France, and of the world, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work worthy of the better days of our history. For me, —

“‘Non movero mai corda  
Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.’

“What Italy has gained by the late transfer of nations it were useless for Englishmen to inquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus; it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, ‘Verily they *will have* their reward,’ and at no very distant period.

“Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever

“Your obliged and affectionate friend,  
“BYRON.”

## CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

### A ROMAUNT

#### *Canto the Fourth*

#### I

I stood in Venice,° on the Bridge of Sighs;  
A palace° and a prison on each hand;  
I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:  
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand  
Around me, and a dying glory smiles  
O'er the far times, when many a subject land



Looked to the winged Lion's<sup>o</sup> marble piles,  
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred  
isles.<sup>o</sup>

## II

She looks a sea Cybele,<sup>o</sup> fresh from ocean, 10  
Rising with her tiara of proud towers  
At airy distance, with majestic motion,  
A ruler of the waters and their powers :  
And such she was ; — her daughters had their dowers  
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East 15  
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.  
In purple was she robed, and of her feast  
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

## III

In Venice Tasso's echoes<sup>o</sup> are no more,  
And silent rows the songless gondolier ; 20  
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,  
And music meets not always now the ear :  
Those days are gone — but beauty still is here.  
States fall, arts fade — but nature doth not die,  
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear, 25  
The pleasant place of all festivity,  
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy !<sup>o</sup>

## IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond  
Her name in story, and her long array  
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond — 30  
Above the dogeless<sup>o</sup> city's vanished sway ;

Ours is a trophy which will not decay  
With the Rialto°; Shylock and the Moor,°  
And Pierre,° cannot be swept or worn away —  
The keystones of the arch ! though all were o'er — 35  
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

## V

The beings of the mind are not of clay ;  
Essentially immortal, they create  
And multiply in us a brighter ray  
And more beloved existence : that which Fate — 40  
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state  
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,  
First exiles, then replaces what we hate ;  
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,  
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void. 45

## VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,  
The first from hope, the last from vacancy ;  
And this worn feeling peoples many a page,  
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye :  
Yet there are things whose strong reality 50  
Outshines our fairy-land ; in shape and hues  
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,  
And the strange constellations which the Muse  
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse :

## VII

I saw or dreamed of such, — but let them go, — 55  
They came like truth, and disappeared like dreams ;

And whatso'er they were — are now but so :  
I could replace them if I would ; still teems  
My mind with many a form which aptly seems  
Such as I sought for, and at moments found ; — 60  
Let these too go — for waking reason deems  
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,  
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

## VIII

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes  
Have made me not a stranger ; to the mind — 65  
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise ;  
Nor is it harsh to make nor hard to find  
A country with — ay, or without mankind :  
Yet was I born<sup>o</sup> where men are proud to be, —  
Not without cause ; and should I leave behind 70  
The inviolate island of the sage and free,  
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea ?

## IX

Perhaps I loved it well ; and should I lay  
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,  
My spirit shall resume it — if we may 75  
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine  
My hopes of being remembered in my line  
With my land's language : if too fond and far  
These aspirations in their scope incline, —  
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are, 80  
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

## X

My name from out the temple° where the dead  
 Are honoured by the nations — let it be —  
 And light the laurels on a loftier head !  
 And be the Spartan's epitaph on me — 85  
 ' Sparta hath° many a worthier son than he.'  
 Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need ;  
 The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree  
 I planted ; they have torn me, and I bleed : 89  
 I should have known what fruit would spring from  
 such a seed.

## XI

The spouseless Adriatic° mourns her lord ;  
 And, annual marriage now no more renewed,  
 The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,  
 Neglected garment of her widowhood !  
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood 95  
 Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,  
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor° sued,  
 And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour  
 When Venice was a queen with an unequalled dower.

## XII

The Suabian° sued, and now the Austrian reigns — 100  
 An Emperor° tramples where an Emperor knelt ;  
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains  
 Clank over sceptred cities ; nations melt  
 From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt  
 The sunshine for a while, and downward go 105  
 Like lauwine° loosened from the mountain's belt ;

Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo° !  
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe !

## XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,°  
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun ; 110  
But is not Doria's menace° come to pass ?  
Are they not *bridled* ? — Venice, lost and won,  
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,  
Sinks,° like a sea-weed, into whence she rose !  
Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun 115  
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,  
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

## XIV

In youth she was all glory, — a new Tyre ;  
Her very by-word sprung from victory,  
The ' Planter of the Lion,' which through fire 120  
The blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea ;  
Though making many slaves, herself still free,  
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite° ;  
Witness Troy's rival, Candia ! Vouch it, ye  
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight° ! 125  
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

## XV

Statues of glass — all shivered — the long file  
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust ;  
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile  
Bespeaks the pageant of their splended trust ; 130

Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,  
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,  
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must  
Too oft remind her who and what enthrals, 134  
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

## XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,  
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,  
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,<sup>o</sup>  
Her voice their only ransom from afar:  
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car 140  
Of the o'ermastered victor stops, the reins  
Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar  
Starts from its belt — he rends his captive's chains,  
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

## XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine, — 145  
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,  
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,  
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot  
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot  
Is shameful to the nations, most of all, 150  
Albion! to thee: the Ocean Queen should not  
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall  
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

## XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me  
Was as a fairy city of the heart, 155

Rising like water-columns from the sea,  
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart ;  
And Otway,° Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,  
Had stamped her image in me, and even so,  
Although I found her thus, we did not part ; 160  
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,  
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

## XIX

I can repeople with the past — and of  
The present there is still for eye and thought,  
And meditation chastened down, enough ; 165  
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought ;  
And of the happiest moments which were wrought,  
Within the web of my existence, some  
From thee, fair Venice ! have their colours caught :  
There are some feelings time cannot benumb, 170  
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and  
dumb.

## XX

But from their nature will the tannen° grow  
Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,  
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below  
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks 175  
Of eddying storms ; yet springs the trunk, and  
mocks  
The howling tempest, till its height and frame  
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks  
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,  
And grew a giant tree ; — the mind may grow the  
same. 180

## XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root  
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode  
In bare and desolated bosoms; mute  
The camel labours with the heaviest load,  
And the wolf dies in silence, — not bestowed 185  
In vain should such example be; if they,  
Things of ignoble or of savage mood  
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay  
May temper it to bear, — it is but for a day.

## XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, 190  
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,  
Ends: — Some, with hope replenished and rebuoyed,  
Return to whence they came — with like intent,  
And weave their web again; some, bowed and bent,  
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time, 195  
And perish with the reed on which they leant,  
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good, or crime,  
According as their souls were formed to sink or climb.

## XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued  
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting, 200  
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;  
And slight withal may be the things which bring  
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling  
Aside for ever: it may be a sound —  
A tone of music — summer's eve — or spring — 205



A flower — the wind — the ocean — which shall wound,  
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly  
bound;

## XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace  
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,  
But feel the shock renewed, nor can efface 210  
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,  
Which out of things familiar, undesigned,  
When least we deem of such, calls up to view  
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind, — 214  
The cold, the changed, perchance the dead — anew,  
The mourned, the loved, the lost — too many! — yet  
how few!

## XXV

But my soul wanders; I demand it back  
To meditate amongst decay, and stand  
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track  
Fallen states and buried greatness, o'er a land 220  
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,  
And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be  
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand;  
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,  
The beautiful, the brave, the lords of earth and sea. 225

## XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!  
And even since, and now, fair Italy!  
Thou art the garden of the world, the home  
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;

Even in thy desert, what is like to thee? 230  
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste  
More rich than other climes' fertility;  
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced  
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

## XXVII

The moon is up,<sup>o</sup> and yet it is not night; 235  
Sunset divides the sky with her; a sea  
Of glory streams along the Alpine height  
Of blue Friuli's mountains<sup>o</sup>; Heaven is free  
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be, —  
Melted to one vast Iris of the West, — 240  
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;  
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest  
Floats through the azure air — an island of the blest!

## XXVIII

A single star<sup>o</sup> is at her side, and reigns  
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still 245  
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains  
Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,  
As Day and Night contending were, until  
Nature reclaimed her order: gently flows  
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil 250  
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,  
Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within  
it glows,

## XXIX

Filled with the face of heaven, which, from afar,  
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,  
From the rich sunset to the rising star, 255  
Their magical variety diffuse :  
And now they change ; a paler shadow strews  
Its mantle o'er the mountains ; parting day  
Dies like the dolphin,° whom each pang imbues  
With a new colour as it gasps away, 260  
The last still loveliest, till — 'tis gone — and all is  
gray.

## XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua ; — reared in air,  
Pillared in their sarcophagus, repose  
The bones of Laura's lover° : here repair  
Many familiar with his well-sung woes, 265  
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose  
To raise a language, and his land reclaim  
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes :  
Watering the tree° which bears his lady's name  
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame. 270

## XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died ;  
The mountain-village where his latter days  
Went down the vale of years ; and 'tis their pride —  
An honest pride — and let it be their praise,  
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze 275  
His mansion and his sepulchre ; both plain  
And venerably simple, such as raise

A feeling more accordant with his strain  
Than if a pyramid formed his monumental fane.

## XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt 280  
Is one of that complexion which seems made  
For those who their mortality have felt,  
And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed  
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,  
Which shows a distant prospect far away 285  
Of busy cities, now in vain displayed,  
For they can lure no further ; and the ray  
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

## XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,  
And shining in the brawling brook, where-by, 290  
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours  
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye  
Idlesse it seem, hath its mortality.  
If from society we learn to live,  
'Tis solitude should teach us how to die ; 295  
It hath no flatterers ; vanity can give  
No hollow aid ; alone — man with his God must strive :

## XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair  
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey  
In melancholy bosoms, such as were 300  
Of moody texture from their earliest day,

And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay  
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom  
Which is not of the pangs that pass away ;  
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb, 305  
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

## XXXV

Ferrara° ! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,  
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,  
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats 310  
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood  
Of Este,° which for many an age made good  
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore  
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood  
Of petty power impelled, of those who wore 314  
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

## XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.  
Hark to his strain, and then survey his cell !  
And see how dearly earned Torquato's fame,  
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell :  
The miserable despot could not quell 320  
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend  
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell  
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end  
Scattered the clouds away ; and on that name attend

## XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time ; while thine 325  
Would rot in its oblivion — in the sink

Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line  
 Is shaken into nothing — but the link  
 Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think  
 Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn ; 330  
 Alfonso, how thy ducal pageants shrink  
 From thee ! if in another station born,  
 Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou mad'st to mourn :

## XXXVIII

*Thou*, formed to eat, and be despised, and die,  
 Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou 335  
 Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty !  
*He*, with a glory round his furrowed brow,  
 Which emanated then, and dazzles now,  
 In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,<sup>o</sup>  
 And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow 340  
 No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,  
 That whetstone of the teeth — monotony in wire !

## XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade ! 'twas his  
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong  
 Aimed with her poisoned arrows, — but to miss. 345  
 Oh, victor unsurpassed in modern song !  
 Each year brings forth its millions ; but how long  
 The tide of generations shall roll on,  
 And not the whole combined and countless throng  
 Compose a mind like thine ! though all in one 350  
 Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form  
 a sun.

## XL

Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those,  
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,  
The Bards<sup>o</sup> of Hell and Chivalry : first rose  
The Tuscan father's comedy divine ; 355  
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,  
The southern Scott, the minstrel who called forth  
A new creation with his magic line,  
And, like the Ariosto of the North, 359  
Sang lady-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

## XLI

The lightning<sup>o</sup> rent from Ariosto's bust  
The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves ;  
Nor was the ominous element unjust,  
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves  
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves, 365  
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow ;  
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,  
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below  
Whate'er it strikes ; — yon head is doubly sacred now.

## XLII

Italia ! oh Italia ! thou who hast 370  
The fatal gift of beauty, which became  
A funeral dower of present woes and past,  
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,  
And annals graved in characters of flame.  
Oh, God ! that thou wert in thy nakedness 375

Less lovely or more powerful, and could claim  
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press  
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress,

## XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal ; or, less desired,  
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord 380  
For thy destructive charms ; then, still untired,  
Would not be seen the armed torrents poured  
Down the deep Alps ; nor would the hostile horde !  
Of many-nationed spoilers from the Po  
Quaff blood and water ; nor the stranger's sword 385  
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,  
Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

## XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,  
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,  
The friend of Tully° : as my bark did skim 390  
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,  
Came Megara before me, and behind  
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,  
And Cōrinth on the left ; I lay reclined  
Along the prow, and saw all these unite 395  
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight ;

## XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but upreared  
Barbaric dwellings on their shattered site,  
Which only make more mourned and more endeared  
The few last rays of their far-scattered light, 400



And the crushed relics of their vanished might.  
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,  
These sepulchres of cities, which excite  
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page  
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage. 405

## XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine  
His country's ruin added to the mass  
Of perished states he mourned in their decline,  
And I in desolation: all that *was*  
Of then destruction *is*: and now, alas ! 410  
Rome — Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,  
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass  
The skeleton of her Titanic form,  
Vrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.

## XLVII

Yet, Italy, through every other land 415  
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side !  
Mother of Arts ! as once of arms ; thy hand  
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide !  
Parent of our Religion ! whom the wide  
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven ! 420  
Europe, repentant of her parricide,  
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,  
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

## XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,  
Where the Etrurian Athens<sup>o</sup> claims and keeps 425

A softer feeling for her fairy halls,  
 Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps  
 Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps  
 To laughing life, with her redundant horn.  
 Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps 430  
 Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,  
 And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new morn.

## XLIX

There, too, the Goddess<sup>o</sup> loves in stone, and fills  
 The air around with beauty; we inhale  
 The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils 435  
 Part of its immortality; the veil  
 Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale  
 We stand, and in that form and face behold  
 What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail;  
 And to the fond idolaters of old 440  
 Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould:

## L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,  
 Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart  
 Reels with its fulness; there — for ever there —  
 Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art, 445  
 We stand as captives, and would not depart.  
 Away! — there need no words, nor terms precise,  
 The paltry jargon<sup>o</sup> of the marble mart,  
 Where Pedantry gulls Folly — we have eyes:  
 Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's  
 prize. 450

## LI

Appearedst thou not to Paris in this guise?  
Or the more deeply blest Anchises°? or,  
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies  
Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War,  
And gazing in thy face as toward a star, 455  
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,  
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are  
With lava kisses melting while they burn,  
Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an  
urn!

## LII

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love, 460  
There full divinity inadequate  
That feeling to express, or to improve,  
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate  
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight  
Of earth recoils upon us; let it go! 465  
We can recall such visions, and create,  
From what has been, or might be, things which grow  
Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

## LIII

I leave to learned fingers, and wise hands,  
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell 470  
How well his connoisseurship understands  
The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell:  
Let these describe the undescribable:  
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream  
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell: 475

The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream  
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

## LIV

In Santa Croce's<sup>o</sup> holy precincts lie  
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is  
Even in itself an immortality, 480  
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,  
The particle of those sublimities  
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose  
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,  
The starry Galileo, with his woes; 485  
Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.

## LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,  
Might furnish forth creation: — Italy!  
Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand  
    rents .  
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny, 490  
And hath denied, to every other sky,  
Spirits which soar from ruin: thy decay  
Is still impregnate with divinity,  
Which gilds it with revivifying ray:  
Such as the great of yore, Canova<sup>o</sup> is to-day. 495

## LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three —  
Dante and Petrarch, and scarce less than they,  
The bard of Prose,<sup>o</sup> creative spirit! he  
Of the Hundred Tales of love — where did they lay

Their bones, distinguished from our common clay 500  
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,  
And have their country's marbles nought to say?  
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?  
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust?

## LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,<sup>o</sup> 505  
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore:  
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,  
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore  
Their children's children would in vain adore  
With the remorse of ages: and the crown 510  
Which Petrarch's laureate brow<sup>o</sup> supremely wore,  
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,  
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled — not thine  
own.

## LVIII

Boccaccio<sup>o</sup> to his parent earth bequeathed  
His dust, — and lies it not her great among, 515  
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed  
O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue?  
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,  
The poetry of speech? No; — even his tomb,  
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong, 520  
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,  
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom*!

## LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust;  
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore

The Cæsar's pageant,° shorn of Brutus' bust, 525  
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more :  
Happier Ravenna ! on thy hoary shore,  
Fortress of falling empire ! honoured sleeps  
The immortal exile : — Arqua, too, her store  
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, 530  
While Florence vainly begs her banished dead and  
weeps.

## LX

What is her pyramid° of precious stones ?  
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues  
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones  
Of merchant-dukes ? the momentary dew 535  
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse  
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead  
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,  
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread  
Than ever placed the slab which paves the princely  
head. 540

## LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes  
In Arno's dome° of Art's most princely shrine,  
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies ;  
There be more marvels yet — but not for mine ;  
For I have been accustomed to entwine 545  
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,  
Than Art in galleries : though a work divine  
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields  
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

## LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam 550  
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles°  
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home ;  
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles  
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles  
The host between the mountains and the shore, 555  
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,  
And torrents, swollen to rivers° with their gore,  
Reek through the sultry plain, with legends scattered  
o'er.

## LXIII

Like to a forest felled by mountain winds ;  
And such the storm of battle on this day, 560  
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds  
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,  
An earthquake reeled unheededly away !  
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,  
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay 565  
Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet,  
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations  
meet !

## LXIV

The earth to them was as a rolling bark  
Which bore them to eternity ; they saw  
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark 570  
The motions of their vessel ; Nature's law  
In them suspended, recked not of the awe  
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the  
birds

Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw  
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing  
herds 575  
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath  
no words.

## LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now :  
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain  
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough ;  
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain 580  
Lay where their roots are ; but a brook hath ta'en —  
A little rill of scanty stream and bed —  
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain ;  
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead  
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters  
red. 585

## LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus,° in thy sweetest wave  
Of the most living crystal that was e'er  
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave  
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear  
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer 590  
Grazes ; the purest god of gentle waters !  
And most serene of aspect, and most clear ;  
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters,  
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters !

## LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still, 595  
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,



Upon a mild declivity of hill,  
Its memory of thee ; beneath it sweeps  
Thy current's calmness ; oft from out it leaps  
The finny darter with the glittering scales, 600  
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps ;  
While, chance, some scattered water-lily sails  
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling  
tales.

## LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place !  
If through the air a zephyr more serene 605  
Win to the brow, 'tis his ; and if ye trace  
Along his margin a more eloquent green,  
If on the heart the freshness of the scene  
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust  
Of weary life a moment lave it clean 610  
With Nature's baptism — 'tis to him ye must  
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

## LXIX

The roar of waters ! — from the headlong height  
Velino° cleaves the wave-worn precipice ;  
The fall of waters ! rapid as the light 615  
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss ;  
The hell of waters ! where they howl and hiss,  
And boil in endless torture : while the sweat  
Of their great agony, wrung out from this  
Their Phlegethon,° curls round the rocks of jet 620  
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

## LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again  
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,  
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,  
Is an eternal April to the ground, 625  
Making it all one emerald : — how profound  
The gulf ! and how the giant element  
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,  
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent  
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful  
vent 630

## LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows  
More like the fountain of an infant sea  
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes  
Of a new world, than only thus to be  
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly, 635  
With many windings, through the vale : — Look  
back !  
Lo ! where it comes like an eternity,  
As if to sweep down all things in its track,  
Charming the eye with dread, — a matchless cataract,

## LXXII

Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge, 640  
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,  
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,  
Like hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn  
Its steady dies, while all around is torn  
By the distracted waters, bears serene 645

Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn :  
 Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,  
 Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

## LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,  
 The infant Alps, which — had I not before 650  
 Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine  
 Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar  
 The thundering lauwine — might be worshipped  
 more ;  
 But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear  
 Her never-trodden snow,° and seen the hoar 655  
 Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,  
 And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

## LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian° mountains of old name ;  
 And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly  
 Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame, 660  
 For still they soared unutterably high :  
 I've looked on Ida with a Trojan's eye ;  
 Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made  
 These hills seem things of lesser dignity,  
 All, save the lone Soracte's height, displayed 665  
 Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's° aid

## LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain  
 Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,  
 And on the curl hangs pausing : not in vain

May he, who will, his recollections rake, 670  
And quote in classic raptures, and awake  
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhorred  
Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,  
The drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word  
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record 675

## LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turned  
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath  
taught  
My mind to meditate what then it learned,  
Yet such the fixed inveteracy wrought  
By the impatience of my early thought, 680  
That, with the freshness wearing out before  
My mind could relish what it might have sought  
If free to choose, I cannot now restore  
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

## LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace, whom I hated so, 685  
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse  
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,  
To comprehend, but never love thy verse;  
Although no deeper moralist rehearse  
Our little life, nor bard prescribe his art, 690  
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,  
Awakening without wounding the touched heart,  
Yet fare thee well — upon Soracte's ridge we part.

## LXXVIII

Oh Rome, my country, City of the soul !  
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee, 695  
Lone mother of dead empires ! and control  
In their shut breasts their petty misery,  
What are our woes and sufferance ? Come and see  
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way  
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye ! 700  
Whose agonies are evils of a day —  
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

## LXXIX

The Niobe<sup>o</sup> of nations ! there she stands  
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe ;  
An empty urn within her withered hands, 705  
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago ;  
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now ;  
The very sepulchres lie tenantless  
Of their heroic dwellers : dost thou flow,  
Old Tiber ! through a marble wilderness ? 710  
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

## LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and  
Fire,  
Have dwelt upon the seven-hilled city's pride ;  
She saw her glories star by star expire,  
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride, 715  
Where the car climbed the Capitol ; far and wide

Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:  
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,  
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,  
 And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night? 720

## LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,  
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap  
 All round us; we but feel our way to err:  
 The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,  
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap; 725  
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer  
 Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap  
 Our hands, and cry 'Eureka'! it is clear —  
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

## LXXXII

Alas, the lofty city! and alas, 730  
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day  
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass  
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!  
 Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,  
 And Livy's pictured page! but these shall be 735  
 Her resurrection; all beside — decay.  
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see  
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was  
 free!

## LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,  
 Triumphant Sylla°! Thou, who didst subdue 740

Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel  
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due  
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew  
O'er prostrate Asia;—thou, who with thy frown  
Annihilated senates—Roman, too, 745  
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down  
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown—

## LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath, — couldst thou divine  
To what would one day dwindle that which made  
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine 750  
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?  
She who was named eternal, and arrayed  
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veiled  
Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed,  
Until the o'er-canopied horizon failed, 755  
Her rushing wings — Oh, she who was Almighty hailed!

## LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,  
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell! — he  
Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne  
Down to a block — immortal rebel! See 760  
What crimes it costs to be a moment free,  
And famous through all ages! but beneath  
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;  
His day° of double victory and death  
Beheld him win two realms, and happier, yield his  
breath. 765

## LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course  
 Had all but crowned him, on the selfsame day  
 Deposed him gently from his throne of force,  
 And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.  
 And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,  
 And all we deem delightful, and consume 771  
 Our souls to compass through each arduous way,  
 Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?  
 Were they but so in man's how different were his  
 doom!

## LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue,<sup>o</sup> yet existent in 775  
 The austere form of naked majesty,  
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassin's din,  
 At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,  
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,  
 An offering to thine altar from the queen 780  
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis<sup>o</sup>! did he die,  
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been  
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

## LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse<sup>o</sup> of Rome!  
 She-wolf! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart 785  
 The milk of conquest yet within the dome  
 Where, as a monument of antique art,  
 Thou standest: — Mother of the mighty heart,  
 Which the great founder sucked from thy wild teat,  
 Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart, 790



And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet  
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge for-  
get?

## LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead —  
The men of iron; and the world hath reared  
Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled 795  
In imitation of the things they feared,  
And fought and conquered, and the same course  
steered,  
At apish distance; but as yet none have,  
Nor could, the same supremacy have neared,  
Save one vain man,<sup>o</sup> who is not in the grave, 800  
But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave—

## XC

The fool of false dominion — and a kind  
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old  
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind  
Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould, 805  
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,  
And an immortal instinct which redeemed  
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,  
Alcides with the distaff<sup>o</sup> now he seemed  
At Cleopatra's feet, — and now himself he beamed, 810

## XCI

And came — and saw — and conquered! But the  
man  
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,

Like a trained falcon, in the Gallic van,  
 Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,  
 With a deaf heart, which never seemed to be 815  
 A listener to itself, was strangely framed;  
 With but one weakest weakness — vanity,  
 Coquettish in ambition, still he aimed —  
 At what? can he avouch or answer what he claimed?

## XCII

And would be all or nothing — nor could wait 820  
 For the sure grave to level him; few years  
 Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,  
 On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror rears  
 The arch of triumph; and for this the tears  
 And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed, 825  
 An universal deluge, which appears  
 Without an ark for wretched man's abode,  
 And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rainbow, God!

## XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?  
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail, 830  
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,  
 And all things weighed in custom's falsest scale°;  
 Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil  
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until right  
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale 835  
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,  
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too  
 much light.

## XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,  
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,  
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die, 840  
Bequeathing their hereditary rage  
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage  
War for their chains,<sup>o</sup> and rather than be free,  
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage  
Within the same arena where they see 845  
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

## XCV

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest between  
Man and his Maker — but of things allowed,  
Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen —  
The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed, 850  
And the intent of tyranny avowed,  
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown  
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,  
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;  
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done. 855

## XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,  
And Freedom find no champion and no child  
Such as Columbia<sup>o</sup> saw arise when she  
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?  
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild, 860  
Deep in the unpruned forest 'midst the roar  
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled

On infant Washington°? Has Earth no more  
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

## XCVII

But France got drunk° with blood to vomit crime,  
And fatal have her Saturnalia been 866  
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;  
Because the deadly days which we have seen,  
And vile Ambition, that built up between  
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall, 870  
And the base pageant last upon the scene,  
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall  
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his  
second fall.

## XCVIII

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,  
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind; 875  
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,  
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;  
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,  
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,  
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find 880  
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;  
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

## XCIX

There is a stern round tower° of other days,  
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,  
Such as an army's baffled strength delays, 885  
Standing with half its battlements alone,

And with two thousand years of ivy grown,  
The garland of eternity, where wave  
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown : —  
What was this tower of strength ? within its cave 890  
What treasure lay so locked, so hid ? — A woman's  
grave.

## C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,  
Tombed in a palace ? Was she chaste and fair ?  
Worthy a king's or more — a Roman's bed ?  
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear ? 895  
What daughter of her beauties was the heir ?  
How lived, how loved, how died she ? Was she not  
So honoured — and conspicuously there,  
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,  
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot ? 900

## CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they  
Who love the lords of others ? such have been  
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.  
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,  
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen, 905  
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,  
Inveterate in virtue ? Did she lean  
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar  
Love from amongst her griefs ? — for such the affec-  
tions are.

## CII

Perchance she died in youth ; it may be, bowed 910  
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb

That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud  
 Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom  
 In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom  
 Heaven gives its favourites — early death; yet  
                   shed 915

A sunset charm around her, and illume  
 With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,  
 Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

## CIII

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,  
 Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray 920  
 On her long tresses, which might yet recall,  
 It may be, still a something of the day  
 When they were braided, and her proud array  
 And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed  
 By Rome — But whither would Conjecture stray?  
 Thus much alone we know — Metella died, 926  
 The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or  
                   pride!

## CIV

I know not why — but standing thus by thee  
 It seems as if I had thine inmate known,  
 Thou Tomb, and other days come back to me 930  
 With recollected music, though the tone  
 Is changed and solemn, like a cloudy groan  
 Of dying thunder on the distant wind;  
 Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone°  
 Till I had bodied forth the heated mind 935  
 Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves  
                   behind;

## CV

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,  
Built me a little bark of hope, once more  
To battle with the ocean and the shocks  
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar 940  
Which rushes on the solitary shore  
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear :  
But could I gather from the wave-worn store  
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer ?  
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is  
here. 945

## CVI

Then let the winds howl on ! their harmony  
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night  
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry  
As I now hear them, in the fading light  
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site, 950  
Answering each other on the Palatine,  
With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,  
And sailing pinions. — Upon such a shrine  
What are our petty griefs ? — let me not number mine.

## CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown 955  
Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped  
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column  
strown  
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steeped  
In subterranean damps, where the owl peeped,  
Deeming it midnight : — Temples, baths, or halls ?

Pronounce who can ; for all that Learning reaped 961  
 From her research hath been, that these are walls —  
 Behold the Imperial Mount ! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

## CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales ;  
 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, 965  
 First freedom and then glory — when that fails,  
 Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last,  
 And History, with all her volumes vast,  
 Hath but *one* page — 'tis better written here,  
 Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed 970  
 All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,  
 Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask — Away with words  
 — draw near,

## CIX

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, — for here  
 There is such matter for all feeling : — Man,  
 Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear ! 975  
 Ages and realms are crowded in this span,  
 This mountain, whose obliterated plan  
 The pyramid of empires pinnacled,  
 Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van  
 Till the sun's rays with added flame were filled ! 980  
 Where are its golden roofs ? Where those who dared to  
 build ?

## CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,  
 Thou nameless column with the buried base!



What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?  
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place. 985  
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,  
'Titus or Trajan's? No — 'tis that of Time;  
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace  
Scoffing; and apostolic statues<sup>o</sup> climb 989  
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

## CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,  
And looking to the stars: they had contained  
A spirit which with these would find a home,  
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned,  
The Roman globe, for after none sustained, 995  
But yielded back his conquests: — he was more  
Than a mere Alexander, and unstained  
With household blood<sup>o</sup> and wine, serenely wore  
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

## CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place 1000  
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep  
Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,  
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap  
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap  
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below 1005  
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —  
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,  
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with  
Cicero!

## CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood :  
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled, 1010  
From the first hour of empire in the bud  
To that when further worlds to conquer failed ;  
But long before had Freedom's face been veiled,  
And Anarchy assumed her attributes ;  
Till every lawless soldier who assailed 1015  
Trode on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,  
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

## CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,  
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,  
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame — 1020  
The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —  
Rienzi,° last of Romans ! While the tree  
Of freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf,  
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —  
The forum's champion, and the people's chief — 1025  
Her new-born Numa thou — with reign, alas ! too  
brief.

## CXV

Egeria,° sweet creation of some heart  
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair  
As thine ideal breast ! whate'er thou art  
Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air, 1030  
The nympholepsy° of some fond despair ;  
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,

Who found a more than common votary there  
Too much adoring ; whatsoe'er thy birth, 1034  
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

## CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled  
With thine Elysian water-drops ; the face  
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,  
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,  
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase 1040  
Art's works ; nor must the delicate waters sleep,  
Prisoned in marble ; bubbling from the base  
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap  
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

## CXVII

Fantastically tangled ; the green hills 1045  
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass  
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills  
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass ;  
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,  
Implore the pausing step, and with their dies 1050  
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass ;  
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,  
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its  
skies.

## CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,  
Egeria, thy all heavenly bosom beating 1055  
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover !

The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting  
With her most starry canopy, and seating  
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?  
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting 1060  
Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell  
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle !

## CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,  
Blend a celestial with a human heart ;  
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing, 1065  
Share with immortal transports? could thine art  
Make them indeed immortal, and impart  
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,  
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —  
The dull satiety which all destroys — 1070  
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy.

## CXX

Alas ! our young affections run to waste,  
Or water but the desert ; whence arise  
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,  
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes, 1075  
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,  
And trees whose gums are poison ; such the plants  
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies  
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants  
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants. 1080

## CXXI

Oh Love, no habitant of earth thou art —  
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee, —  
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart, —  
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see  
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be; 1085  
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,  
Even with its own desiring phantasy,  
And to a thought such shape and image given,  
As haunts the unquenched soul — parched, wearied,  
    · wrung, and riven.

## CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased, 1090  
And fevers into false creation. Where,  
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?  
In him alone. Can nature show so fair?  
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare  
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men, 1095  
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,  
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,  
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

## CXXIII

Who loves, raves — 'tis youth's frenzy — but the  
    cure  
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds 1100  
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure  
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's

Ideal shape of such ; yet still it binds  
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,  
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds ; 1105  
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,  
Seems ever near the prize — wealthiest when most un-  
done.

## CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away —  
Sick — sick ; unfound the boon, unslak'd the thirst,  
Though to the last, in verge of our decay, 1110  
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first —  
But all too late, — so are we doubly curst.  
Love, fame, ambition, avarice — 'tis the same,  
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst —  
For all are meteors with a different name, 1115  
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

## CXXV

Few — none — find what they love or could have  
loved.  
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong  
Necessity of loving, have removed  
Antipathies — but to recur, ere long, 1120  
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong ;  
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god  
And miscreator, makes and helps along  
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod, 1124  
Whose touch turns hope to dust, — the dust we all have  
trod.

## CXXVI

Our life is a false nature<sup>o</sup>: 'tis not in  
The harmony of things, — this hard decree,  
This uneradicable taint of sin,  
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,  
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be 1130  
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —  
Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see,  
And worse, the woes we see not — which throb  
through  
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

## CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly — 'tis a base 1135  
Abandonment of reason to resign  
Our right of thought — our last and only place  
Of refuge: this at least, shall still be mine:  
Though from our birth the faculty divine  
Is chained and tortured — cabined, cribbed, con-  
fined, 1140  
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine  
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,  
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch<sup>o</sup> the  
blind.

## CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,  
Collecting the chief trophies of her line, 1145  
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,  
Her Coliseum<sup>o</sup> stands; the moonbeams shine  
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine

Should be the light which streams here, to illumine  
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine 1150  
Of contemplation ; and the azure gloom  
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

## CXXIX

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,  
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,  
And shadows forth its glory. There is given 1155  
Unto the things of earth, which time hath bent,  
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant  
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power  
And magic in the ruined battlement,  
For which the palace of the present hour 1160  
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

## CXXX

Oh Time, the beautifier of the dead,  
Adorner of the ruin, comforter  
And only healer when the heart hath bled ! —  
Time ! the corrector where our judgments err, 1165  
The test of truth, love — sole philosopher,  
For all beside are sophists — from thy thrift,  
Which never loses though it doth defer —  
Time, the avenger ! unto thee I lift 1169  
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift :

## CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine  
And temple more divinely desolate,



Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,  
Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate :  
If thou hast ever seen me too elate, 1175  
Hear me not ; but if calmly I have borne  
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate  
Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn  
This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they* not mourn ?

## CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong 1180  
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis !  
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —  
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,  
And round Orestes° bade them howl and hiss  
For that unnatural retribution — just, 1185  
Had it but been from hands less near — in this  
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust !  
Dost thou not hear my heart ? — Awake ! thou shalt,  
and must.

## CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurred  
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound 1190  
I bleed withal, and had it been conferred  
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound ;  
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground :  
To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take  
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found  
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake — 1196  
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

## CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now  
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak  
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow, 1200  
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;  
But on this page a record will I seek.  
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,  
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak  
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse, 1205  
And pile on human heads the mountains of my curse!

## CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness,° — Have I not —  
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —  
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?  
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven? 1210  
Have I not had my brains seared, my heart riven,  
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?  
And only not to desperation driven,  
Because not altogether of such clay  
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey. 1215

## CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy  
Have I not seen what human things could do?  
From the loud roar of foaming calumny  
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,  
And subtler venom of the reptile crew, 1220  
The Janus° glance of whose significant eye,

Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,  
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,  
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

## CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain : 1225  
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,  
And my frame perish even in conquering pain ;  
But there is that within me which shall tire  
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire ;  
Something unearthly, which they deem not of, 1230  
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,  
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move  
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

## CXXXVIII

The seal is set. — Now welcome, thou dread power,  
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here 1235  
Walkest in the shadow of the midnight hour  
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear !  
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear  
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene  
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear 1240  
That we become a part of what has been,  
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

## CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,  
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,  
As man was slaughtered by his fellow man. 1245

And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because  
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,  
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?  
What matters where we fall to fill the maws  
Of worms, — on battle-plains or listed spot? 1250  
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

## CXL

I see before me the Gladiator<sup>o</sup> lie:  
He leans upon his hands — his manly brow  
Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
And his drooped head sinks gradually low — 1255  
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
The arena swims around him — he is gone,  
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch  
who won. 1260

## CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes  
Were with his heart, and that was far away;  
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,  
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,  
*There* were his young barbarians all at play, 1265  
*There* was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,  
Butchered to make a Roman holiday —  
All this rushed with his blood — Shall he expire  
And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

## CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam ;  
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways, 1271  
And roared or murmured like a mountain stream  
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays ;  
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise°  
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd, 1275  
My voice sounds much — and fall the stars' faint rays°  
On the arena void — seats crushed — walls bowed —  
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely  
loud.

## CXLIII

A ruin — yet what ruin ! — from its mass  
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been reared ; 1280  
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,  
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.  
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared ?  
Alas ! developed, opens the decay,  
When the colossal fabric's form is neared : 1285  
It will not bear the brightness of the day,  
Which streams too much to all years, man, have reft  
away.

## CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb  
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there ;  
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time, 1290  
And the low night-breeze waves along the air  
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,  
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head ;

When the light shines serene but doth not glare,  
 Then in this magic circle raise the dead : 1295  
 Heroes have trod this spot — 'tis on their dust ye tread.

## CXLV

' While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand ;  
 When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,  
 And when Rome falls — the World.' From our own  
 land  
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall 1300  
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call  
 Ancient ; and these three mortal things are still  
 On their foundations, and unaltered all ;  
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,  
 The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye  
 will. 1305

## CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —  
 Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,  
 From Jove to Jesus — spared and blessed by time ;  
 Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods 1309  
 Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods  
 His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome !  
 Shalt thou not last ? Time's scythe and tyrants' rod  
 Shiver upon thee — sanctuary and home  
 Of art and piety — Pantheon° ! — pride of Rome !

## CXLVII

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts ! 1315  
 Despoiled yet perfect, with thy circle spreads

A holiness appealing to all hearts —  
To art a model ; and to him who treads  
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds  
Her light through thy sole aperture° ; to those 1320  
Who worship, here are altars for their beads ;  
And they who feel for genius may repose  
Their eyes on honoured forms, whose busts around them  
close.

## CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light  
What do I gaze on ? Nothing : Look again ! 1325  
Two forms° are slowly shadowed on my sight —  
Two insulated phantoms of the brain :  
It is not so ; I see them full and plain —  
An old man, and a female young and fair,  
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein 1330  
The blood is nectar : — But what doth she there,  
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare ?

## CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,  
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took  
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife, 1335  
Blest into mother, in the innocent look,  
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook  
No pain, and small suspense, a joy perceives  
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook  
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves — 1340  
What may the fruit be yet ? — I know not — Cain was  
Eve's.

## CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,  
The milk of his own gift : it is her sire  
To whom she renders back the debt of blood  
Born with her birth. No ; he shall not expire 1345  
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire  
Of health and holy feeling can provide  
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher  
Than Egypt's river : from that gentle side  
Drink, drink and live, old man ! Heaven's realm holds  
no such tide. 1350

## CLI

The starry fable° of the milky way  
Has not thy story's purity : it is  
A constellation of a sweeter ray,  
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this  
Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss 1355  
Where sparkle distant worlds : — Oh, holiest nurse !  
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss  
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source  
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

## CLII

Turn to the mole° which Hadrian reared on high,  
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles, 1361  
Colossal copyist of deformity,  
Whose travelled phantasy from the far Nile's  
Enormous model, doomed the artist's toils  
To build for giants, and for his vain earth, 1365



His shrunken ashes, raised his doom : How smiles  
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,  
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

## CLIII

But lo ! the dome° — the vast and wondrous dome,  
To which Diana's marvel° was a cell — 1370  
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb !  
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle ; —  
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell  
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade ;  
I have beheld Sophia's° bright roofs swell 1375  
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have surveyed  
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem prayed ;

## CLIV

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,  
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —  
Worthiest of God the holy and the true. 1380  
Since Zion's desolation,° when that He  
Forsook his former city, what could be,  
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,  
Of a sublimer aspect ? Majesty,  
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all are aisled 1385  
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

## CLV

Enter : its grandeur overwhelms thee not ;  
And why ? it is not lessened ; but thy mind,  
Expanded by the genius of the spot,

Has grown colossal, and can only find 1390  
 A fit abode wherein appear enshrined  
 Thy hopes of immortality; and thou  
 Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,  
 See thy God face to face, as thou dost now  
 His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow. 1395

## CLVI

Thou movest, but increasing with the advance,  
 Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,  
 Deceived by its gigantic elegance;  
 Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise —  
 All musical in its immensities; 1400  
 Rich marbles, richer painting — shrines where flame  
 The lamps of gold — and haughty dome which vies  
 In air with Earth's chief structures, though their  
 frame  
 Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the clouds must  
 claim.

## CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break,  
 To separate contemplation, the great whole; 1406  
 And as the ocean many bays will make  
 That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul  
 To more immediate objects, and control  
 Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart 1410  
 Its eloquent proportions, and unroll  
 In mighty graduations, part by part,  
 The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

## CLVIII

Not by its fault — but thine : Our outward sense  
Is but of gradual grasp — and as it is 1415  
That what we have of feeling most intense  
Outstrips our faint expression : even so this  
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice  
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great  
Defies at first our Nature's littleness, 1420  
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate  
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

## CLIX

Then pause, and be enlightened ; there is more  
In such a survey than the sating gaze  
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore 1425  
The worship of the place, or the mere praise  
Of art and its great masters, who could raise  
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could  
plan ;  
The fountain of sublimity displays  
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man 1430  
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

## CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see  
Laocoön's torture<sup>o</sup> dignifying pain —  
A father's love and mortal's agony  
With an immortal patience blending : Vain 1435  
The struggle ; vain, against the coiling strain

And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,  
The old man's clench ; the long envenomed chain  
Rivets the living links, — the enormous asp  
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp. 1440

## CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,<sup>o</sup>  
The God of life, and poesy, and light —  
The sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow  
All radiant from his triumph in the fight ;  
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright  
With an immortal's vengeance ; in his eye 1446  
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might  
And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,  
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

## CLXII

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love, 1450  
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast  
Longed for a deathless lover from above,  
And maddened in that vision — are exprest  
All that ideal beauty ever blessed  
The mind with, in its most unearthly mood, 1455  
When each conception was a heavenly guest —  
A ray of immortality — and stood,  
Starlike, around, until they gathered to a god !

## CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven  
The fire which we endure, it was repaid 1460

By him to whom the energy was given  
Which this poetic marble hath arrayed  
With an eternal glory — which, if made  
By human hands, is not of human thought;  
And Time himself hath hallowed it, nor laid 1465  
One ringlet in the dust — nor hath it caught  
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which  
'twas wrought.

## CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim<sup>o</sup> of my song,  
The being who upheld it through the past?  
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long. 1470  
He is no more — these breathings are his last;  
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,  
And he himself is nothing: — if he was  
Aught but a phantasy, and could be classed  
With forms which live and suffer — let that pass<sup>o</sup> —  
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass, 1476

## CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all  
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,  
And spreads the dim and universal pall  
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the  
cloud 1480  
Between us sinks and all which ever glowed,  
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays  
A melancholy halo scarce allowed.  
To hover on the verge of darkness; rays 1484  
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze.

## CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,  
To gather what we shall be when the frame  
Shall be resolved to something less than this  
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,  
And wipe the dust from off the idle name 1490  
We never more shall hear, — but never more,  
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:  
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore  
These fardels of the heart — the heart whose sweat  
was gore.

## CLXVII

Hark — forth from the abyss a voice<sup>o</sup> proceeds, 1495  
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,  
Such as arises when a nation bleeds  
With some deep and immedicable wound;  
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending  
ground,  
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief 1500  
Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,  
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief  
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

## CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?  
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead? 1505  
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low  
Some less majestic, less beloved head?  
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,  
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,

Death hushed that pang for ever : with thee fled 1510  
The present happiness and promised joy  
Which filled the imperial isles so full it seemed to cloy.

## CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it be,  
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored,  
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee, 1515  
And freedom's heart grown heavy, cease to hoard  
Her many griefs for ONE ! for she had poured  
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head  
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,  
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou wed ! 1520  
The husband of a year ! the father of the dead !

## CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made ;  
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes : in the dust  
The fair haired Daughter of the Isles is laid,  
The love of millions ! How we did entrust 1525  
Futurity to her ; and, though it must  
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deemed  
Our children should obey her child, and blessed  
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seemed  
Like stars to shepherd's eyes : — 'twas but a meteor  
beamed. 1530

## CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her ; for she sleeps well :  
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue

Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,  
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung  
Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung 1535  
Nations have armed in madness, the strange fate  
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung  
Against their blind omnipotence a weight  
Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late, —

## CLXXII

These might have been her destiny; but no, 1540  
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,  
Good without effort, great without a foe.  
But now a bride and mother — and now *there*!  
How many ties did that stern moment tear!  
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast 1545  
Is linked the electric chain of that despair,  
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest  
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee  
best.

## CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navelled in the woody hills  
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears 1550  
The oak from his foundation, and which spills  
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears  
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares  
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;  
And calm as cherished hate, its surface wears 1555  
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,  
All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.



## CLXXIV

And nêar, Albano's scarce divided waves  
Shine from a sister valley ; — and afar  
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves 1560  
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,  
' Arms and the man,'<sup>o</sup> whose re-ascending star  
Rose o'er an empire : — but beneath thy right  
Tully reposed from Rome ; — and where yon bar  
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight 1565  
The Sabine farm<sup>o</sup> was tilled, ' the weary bard's' de-  
light.

## CLXXV

But I forget. — My Pilgrim's shrine is won,  
And he and I must part, — so let it be, —  
His task and mine alike are nearly done ;  
Yet once more let us look upon the sea ; 1570  
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,  
And from the Alban Mount we now behold  
Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we  
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock<sup>o</sup> unfold  
Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine  
rolled 1575

## CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades<sup>o</sup> : long years —  
Long, though not very many — since have done  
Their work on both ; some suffering and some tears  
Have left us nearly where we had begun :  
Yet not vain our mortal race hath run ; 1580  
We have had our reward, and it is here, —

That we can yet feel gladdened by the sun,  
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear  
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

## CLXXVII

Oh ! that the Desert were my dwelling-place, 1585  
With one fair Spirit for my minister,  
That I might all forget<sup>o</sup> the human race,  
And, hating no one, love but only her !  
Ye elements ! — in whose ennobling stir  
I feel myself exalted — Can ye not 1590  
Accord me such a being ? Do I err  
In deeming such inhabit many a spot ?  
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

## CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595  
There is society, where none intrudes,  
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar :  
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,  
From these our interviews, in which I steal  
From all I may be, or have been before, 1600  
To mingle with the Universe, and feel  
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

## CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep<sup>o</sup> and dark blue Ocean — roll !  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;  
Man marks the earth with ruin — his control 1605

Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain  
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan, 1610  
Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

## CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, — thy fields  
Are not a spoil for him, — thou dost arise  
And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he  
wields  
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise, 1615  
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,  
And sendest him shivering in thy playful spray  
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies  
His petty hope in some near port or bay, 1619  
And dashest him again to earth : — there let him lay.°

## CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls  
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,  
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,  
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make  
Their clay creator the vain title take 1625  
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war —  
These are thy toys, and as the snowy flake,  
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar  
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

## CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —  
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they? 1631  
Thy waters washed them power while they were  
free,  
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey  
The stranger, slave, or savage! their decay  
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou; 1635  
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play —  
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow —  
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

## CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form  
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time, — 1640  
Calm or convulsed, in breeze or gale or storm,  
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime  
Dark-heaving — boundless, endless, and sublime,  
The image of eternity, the throne  
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime 1645  
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone  
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

## CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean°! and my joy  
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be  
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy 1650  
I wantoned with thy breakers — they to me  
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea  
Made them a terror — 'twas a pleasing fear,

For I was as it were a child of thee,  
And trusted to thy billows far and near, 1655  
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

## CLXXXV

My task is done, my song has ceased, my theme  
Has died into an echo; it is fit  
The spell should break of this protracted dream.  
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit 1660  
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ;  
Would it were worthier! but I am not now  
That which I have been — and my visions flit  
Less palpably before me — and the glow 1664  
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

## CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been —  
A sound which makes us linger; — yet — farewell!  
Ye! who have traced the pilgrim to the scene  
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell  
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell 1670  
A single recollection, not in vain  
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell°;  
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,  
If such there were — with *you*, the moral of his strain.

## NOTES

1. 1. **Venice.** The present city of Venice was founded about the beginning of the ninth century ; but long before this time the site had been occupied by a people who had formed a republican type of government and had placed a doge, or duke, at its head. It was between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries that the state reached its brightest prosperity and power. In fact, the republic had become so powerful at the beginning of the thirteenth century that the Byzantine empire fell into its hands and for hundreds of years the state ruled over many colonies and dependencies. The city became wealthy through trade in salt and by means of commerce with the East. Its arsenal once employed 16,000 workmen and its naval force consisted of 200 galleys. Throughout the world Venice was famed for its manufactures of glass, pottery, and silk ; for the art of printing ; and for its cultivation of literature, painting, and architecture. Early in the seventeenth century, however, indolence and luxury began to make their appearance ; trade with the East had ceased to pass through the Mediterranean, and Venice gradually declined. By 1718, the republic had ceased to exercise any important influence in European politics. On the 16th of May, 1797, Napoleon entered the city and proclaimed the end of the republic. Venice remained in the hands of France or Austria until the Austro-Prussian war gave her her freedom in 1866 and the city was joined to the Italian kingdom.

1. 2. **a palace.** The ducal palace has been destroyed or burned a great many times. The existing structure was begun

in 1300 and has been frequently enlarged or altered. The building contained not only the state apartments of the doge and the legislative chambers, but also the state prison. But in the sixteenth century a new prison was constructed across the narrow canal, Rio del Palazzo, and a gallery, usually known as the Bridge of Sighs, was built to connect the two buildings. In addition to a passage this gallery contained a chamber in which condemned criminals were strangled to death.

l. 8. **the winged Lion's.** The bronze Lion of St. Mark became the emblem of Venice. It was cast in the city about 1178. Together with many other Venetian treasures it was taken to Paris by Napoleon, but later was returned. Ruskin calls it one of the grandest things produced by mediæval art.

l. 9. **her hundred isles.** The modern city occupies 117 islands.

l. 10. **sea cybele.** Cybele was regarded as the Earth-mother and the protectress of fortresses. She is represented as wearing a crown surmounted with towers. Lions either draw her chariot or lie by her side.

l. 19. **Tasso's echoes.** The Venetian gondoliers were formerly accustomed to sing responsively alternate stanzas from Tasso's *Jerusalem*.

l. 27. In 1802 Wordsworth wrote his famous sonnet *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*. Which do you consider to be the better, Byron's stanzas, or the version of Wordsworth?

“Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee,  
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth  
Of Venice did not fall below her birth. —  
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.

She was a maiden City, bright and free;  
 No guile seduced, no force could violate;  
 And, when she took unto herself a Mate,  
 She must espouse the everlasting Sea.  
 And what if she had seen those glories fade,  
 Those titles vanish, and that strength decay:  
 Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid  
 When her long life hath reached its final day:  
 Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade  
 Of that which once was great is passed away."

— William Wordsworth.

1. 31. **dogeless.** The doge abdicated his office on the 12th of May, 1797, four days before Napoleon entered the city and proclaimed the end of the republic.

1. 33. **Rialto.** One of the islands on which Venice is built. The name was later applied to the Exchange building and its vicinity. In the latter sense the term was used by Shylock, the Jewish money-lender of *The Merchant of Venice*. At a time later than that of Shakespeare's play the name was given to the famous bridge which crosses the Grand Canal.

1. 33. **Moor.** Shakespeare's Othello.

1. 34. **Pierre.** A character in Otway's *Venice Preserved*.

1. 69. **yet I was born.** Hobhouse said Byron never seemed at ease. When in England he wished to be abroad and when abroad he longed for home.

1. 82. **My name from out the temple.** After Byron's death his relatives applied in vain for permission to inter his body in Westminster Abbey.

1. 86. **Sparta hath.** Hobhouse says this remark was made by the mother of Brasidas, a Spartan general, when her son's memory was praised.

1. 91. **The spouseless Adriatic.** On the 20th of May, 998, the doge Pietro Orseolo overcame a great fleet of pirates and made Venice supreme over the sea. To commemorate



this event, each year on Ascension Day were celebrated the espousals of the doge with the Adriatic. A ring was thrown into the water from the state galley, the *Bucentaur*.

1. 97. **Emperor.** In 1177, the emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, was forced to yield to Pope Alexander III.

1. 100. **The Suabian.** Frederick Barbarossa.

1. 101. **An Emperor.** Napoleon.

1. 106. **lauwine.** Or lawine, German for avalanche.

1. 107. The Byzantine empire fell into the hands of the Venetians through the capture of Constantinople in 1204. They were led by their doge Dandolo, who was ninety-seven years of age.

1. 109. **Steeds of brass.** The famous horses of St. Mark's (long spoken of as the only horses in Venice) which were originally in Rome and were taken by Constantine to Constantinople, were brought to Venice by Dandolo, were taken to Paris by Napoleon, but were restored to Venice in 1815.

1. 111. **Doria's menace.** In 1379, Peter Doria, a Genoese commander, threatened to bridle the horses of St. Mark's.

1. 114. **Sinks.** To build foundations that will prevent the heavy buildings of Venice from sinking into the marshy soil requires great engineering skill.

1. 123. **Ottomite.** The Turks were the traditional enemies of the Venetians. The latter defended Candia for twenty-four years, while the famous siege of Troy lasted but ten years.

1. 125. **Lepanto's fight.** In 1571, with the help of Spain and the Pope, the Venetians defeated the Turks in a naval battle.

1. 138. Some of the Athenian captives are said by Plutarch to have regained their freedom by singing passages from Euripides.

1. 158. **Otway.** He had probably read *Venice Preserved*, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, *Der Geisterseher*, and *The Merchant of Venice*.

1. 172. **Tannen.** German for fir trees. The following four stanzas are typical of Byron's poetry.

1. 235. **The moon is up.** Can you visualize the scene as he describes it? Byron here begins a poetical account of a trip which he took through northern Italy in the spring of 1817.

1. 238. **Blue Friuli's Mountains.** The Julian Alps. Byron's point of view is the mainland opposite Venice where the river Brenda flows into the sea.

1. 244. **A single star.** Keats, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and many other poets have noted the emotional effect produced by a single star.

1. 259. **dolphin.** Not the dolphin, but a fish, the dorado, possesses the beautiful colors to which Byron refers.

1. 264. **Laura's lover.** Petrarch, whose tomb in Arqua is supported on pillars.

1. 269. **the tree.** The laurel.

1. 307. **Ferrara.** A city eighty miles southwest of Venice.

1. 311. **Este.** The house of Este ruled in Ferrara. Alphonso I. was a patron of Ariosto; and Alphonso II., of Torquato Tasso. The latter became insane, and Alphonso, after long hesitation and the exercise of much commendable patience, ordered the poet confined in the madhouse of St. Anna. There is probably no truth in the story that he was imprisoned on account of his love for Leonora d'Este.

1. 339. **the Cruscan quire.** The Academia della Crusca of Florence censured Tasso's *Jerusalem*. Boileau, the French critic, also found fault with the poem.

1. 354. **Bards.** Dante, the Tuscan father, was the author

of the Inferno, which is a part of *The Divine Comedy*; Ariosto, the southern Scott, wrote *Orlando Furioso*, a poem of chivalry. Scott is called, "the Ariosto of the North."

1. 361. **the lightning.** "Before the remains of Ariosto were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning and a crown of iron laurels melted away." — HOBHOUSE.

1. 390. **The friend of Tully.** Servius Sulpicius wrote a letter to Cicero on the death of the latter's daughter. He spoke of the insignificance of an individual death as compared with the downfall of a state.

1. 425. **Etrurian Athens.** Florence.

1. 433. **the goddess.** The statue of Venus de Medici.

1. 448. **the paltry jargon.** The technical language of art critics.

1. 450. **Paris,** in recognition of the beauty of Venus, awarded her the golden apple.

1. 452. **Æneas** was the son of Anchises and Venus.

1. 478. **Santa Croce.** Byron in a letter says of this church, "The tombs of Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Galileo, and Alfieri, make it the Westminster Abbey of Italy."

1. 495. **Canova.** The famous sculptor died in 1822.

1. 498. **The bard of prose.** Boccaccio.

1. 505. **Dante sleeps afar.** He was buried at Ravenna and Scipio beside the sea at Liternum.

1. 511. **Petrarch's laureate brow.** Petrarch was crowned poet laureate in the Capitol at Rome. His father had been banished from Florence when Petrarch was very young.

1. 514. **Boccaccio.** He was buried at Certaldo near the place of his birth, but his tombstone was uprooted because he had been the enemy of monks.

1. 525. **Cæsar's pageant.** At the funeral of the sister of

Brutus the busts of the men who took part in the assassination were excluded from the procession.

l. 532. **pyramid.** "I went to the Medici Chapel — fine frippery, in great slabs of various expensive stones, to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcasses." — BYRON.

l. 542. **Arno's dome.** The Florence picture gallery.

l. 551. **defiles.** Where Hannibal defeated the Romans.

l. 557. **torrents swollen to rivers.** Poets seem unable to speak without exaggeration of blood-shedding in battles.

l. 586. **Clitumnus.** A stream famous in pastoral poetry. It is tributary to the Tiber. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* said: "Perhaps there are no verses in our language of happier descriptive power than the two stanzas which characterize the latter river. In general poets find it so difficult to leave an interesting subject, that they injure the distinctness of the description by loading it so as to embarrass rather than excite the fancy of the reader; or else, to avoid that fault, they confine themselves to cold and abstract generalities. The author has judiciously steered his course betwixt these extremes; while they present the outlines of a picture as pure and brilliant as those of Claude Lorraine, the task of filling up the more minute particulars is judiciously left to the imagination of the reader."

l. 614. **Velino.** The waterfall of Terni, where the Velino river falls six hundred and fifty feet.

l. 620. **Phlegethon.** A river of the lower regions.

l. 655. **Her never-trodden snow.** Since Byron's day the Jungfrau has been climbed.

l. 658. **Acroceraunian.** "Thunder heights" is the meaning of the name.

l. 666. **lyric Roman.** Horace described Soracte as covered with snow.

1. 703. **Niobe.** The goddess who wept for her seven children who were slain by Apollo and Diana on account of Niobe's boasting.

1. 740. **Sylla.** Sylla, or Sulla, began his war with Mithridates before he had enjoyed the fruits of his victory over Marius.

1. 764. **His day.** "On the 3d of September Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar; a year afterwards he obtained 'his crowning mercy' of Worcester; and a few years after on the same day, which he ever esteemed the most fortunate for him, he died" — BYRON.

1. 775. **dread statue.** In the Spada Palace at Rome is a statue of Pompey which is said to be that at the feet of which Cæsar fell in the Capitol as described in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*.

1. 781. **Nemesis.** Daughter of Night. She represented the righteous anger and vengeance of the gods.

1. 784. **thunder-stricken nurse.** A bronze wolf, still existing in Rome, is thought to be that which Cicero referred to in one of his orations.

1. 800. **one vain man.** Napoleon. Byron treated his character at length in *Childe Harold*, Canto III., stanza XXXVI.

1. 809. **Alcides with the distaff.** Hercules in the dress of a woman served Queen Omphale for three years and spun wool. It was Antony who loved Cleopatra.

1. 832. **custom's falsest scale.** Byron showed himself the poet of revolution by inveighing against custom all his life long. He did little enough in a constructive way to help establish better customs.

1. 843. **War for their chains.** About the time that Byron penned these words he also wrote, "I have simplified my

politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments."

l. 858. **Columbia.** America sprang suddenly into full liberty as Pallas, or Minerva, sprang full-armed from the brain of Jove.

l. 863. **Washington.** In the Ode to *Napoleon Buona-*  
*parte* Byron wrote :—

"Where may the wearied eye repose  
When gazing on the Great;  
Where neither guilty glory glows  
Nor despicable state?"

Yes — one — the first — the last — the best,  
The Cincinnatus of the West,  
Whom envy dared not hate,  
Bequeath the name of Washington,  
To make man blush there was but one."

And in Don Juan, Canto IX., stanza VIII. :—

"George Washington had thanks and nought beside,  
Except the all cloudless glory (which few men's is)  
To free his country."

l. 865. **France got drunk.** A reference to the bloodshed and license brought about by the French Revolution.

l. 883. **tower.** The tomb of Cæcilia Metella.

l. 934. **Yet I could seat me by this ivied stone.** A writer in the *Quarterly Review* said of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*: "His descriptions of present and existing scenes however striking and beautiful, his recurrence to past actions however important and however powerfully described, become interesting chiefly from the tincture they receive from the mind of the author."

l. 989. **apostolic statues.** On the top of the Pillar of Trajan stands a statue of St. Peter. The place it occupies was

once taken by an urn which was supposed to hold the ashes of Trajan.

l. 998. **household blood.** Alexander, while intoxicated at a feast, killed his friend Clitus.

l. 1022. **Rienzi.** He led an insurrection against the nobles and was proclaimed tribune in 1347.

l. 1027. **Egeria.** The nymph who counselled Numa.

l. 1031. **nympholepsy.** A kind of ecstasy or frenzy said to take possession of one who looked on a nymph in a stream or spring.

l. 1126. **Our life is a false nature.** John Morley says: "This melancholy and despondent reaction is the revolutionary course — the product of the mental and social conditions of western Europe at the close of the eighteenth century."

l. 1143. **Couch.** To operate surgically for the relief of cataract.

l. 1147. **Coliseum.** The Flavian amphitheatre. It was begun by Vespasian in 75 A.D. and was completed five years later by Titus; it was still used as late as the sixth century. Its shape is elliptical; and its axes measure 617 and 512 feet. About 87,000 persons could be seated and about 15,000 more spectators could be admitted. In the arena wild beasts and gladiators fought, criminals and Christian martyrs were executed, and chariot races were held. Sometimes the space was flooded and sea fights took place. The external elevation consisted of four stages, the lower three of which each had eighty arches. During the Middle Ages great quantities of stone were taken from the Coliseum and were used for building purposes. Even Michael Angelo was one of the plunderers.

l. 1184. **Orestes.** He was pursued by the Furies for having killed his mother.



l. 1207. **Forgiveness.** A strange word to come from the author of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and the poet of revolt.

l. 1221. **Janus.** The god with two faces.

l. 1252. **Gladiator.** He refers to the statue sometimes called The Dying Gaul. The poet passes beyond the moment represented by the sculptor and gives us the pictures that flickered in the gladiator's memory as he died. Here Byron is at his best. The subject suits his genius. No one has written lines that show a stronger sympathy with human suffering and human wrong.

l. 1274. **blame or praise.** "When one gladiator wounded another, he shouted, 'He has it,' 'Hic habet,' or 'Habet.' The wounded combatant dropped his weapon, and, advancing to the edge of the arena, supplicated the spectators. If he had fought well, the people saved him; if otherwise, or as they happened to be inclined, they turned their thumbs and he was slain." — HOBHOUSE.

l. 1276. **the stars' faint rays.** Where can we find an example of contrast more skilfully wrought!

l. 1314. **Pantheon.** This, the most perfectly preserved of ancient Roman buildings, was built originally by Agrippa in 27 B.C., but was rebuilt by Hadrian. It is now used as a church and a place of sepulchre for eminent Italians.

l. 1320. **sole aperture.** Light is admitted through an opening at the apex of the dome.

l. 1326. **Two forms.** The story of the young mother, who with her own milk nourished her aged father, who was starving in prison, has often been told.

l. 1351. **The starry fable.** The milky way was said to have been caused by the spilling of milk from the breast of Juno.



l. 1360. *the mole.* The mausoleum of Hadrian now used as a prison and known as the castle of St. Angelo.

l. 1369. *the dome.* St. Peter's.

l. 1370. *Diana's marvel.* The temple of Diana at Ephesus.

l. 1375. *Sophia's.* The mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople. This edifice, known originally as the church of the Divine Wisdom, was built by Justinian about 532. In 1453, when Constantinople passed into the hands of the Turks, Mahomet turned the church into a mosque.

l. 1381. *Zion's desolation.* The temple at Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Roman emperor Titus.

l. 1433. *Laocoön's torture.* The original Laocoön group is in the Vatican. According to the tradition Laocoön attempted to assist his sons, who were attacked by serpents, and was strangled, together with his children.

l. 1441. *Lord of the unerring bow.* The statue of Apollo Belvedere, so called because it is located in the belvedere or upper story of the Vatican.

l. 1468. *the Pilgrim.* Childe Harold, the pilgrim, who was introduced in Canto I. as the traveller and moralizer, is here mentioned in Canto IV. for the first time. Byron at this point threw off the burdensome disguise, for he was aware that he had failed to secure for his hero that willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the readers which constitutes poetic faith.

l. 1475. *let that pass.* This and l. 1197 suggests Hamlet's "We could, an if we would."

l. 1495. *from the abyss a voice.* The Princess Charlotte, only daughter of George IV., and wife of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, died in childbirth, November 6, 1817.

l. 1562. *'Arms and the man.'* The first words of Virgil's

Æneid. After the fall of Troy Æneas's star ascended, for he helped to found Rome.

l. 1566. The Sabine farm. It was a country residence of the poet Horace.

l. 1574. last by Calpe's rock. The last elaborate description of ocean in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* was in Canto II. about stanza XXII. where the ship passed Calpe's straits at Gibraltar.

l. 1576. Symplegades. Islands at the entrance to the Black Sea.

l. 1587. That I might forget. This is the climax in the expression of individuality in poetry. Since Byron's time the individual has counted for less and mankind for more.

l. 1603. Roll on, thou deep. This is Byron at his best, and few indeed are the poets who have done better.

l. 1620. lay. There is in English literature, perhaps, no more famous error in grammar.

l. 1648. And I have loved thee, Ocean. Swimming and boating were Byron's favorite sports. He once swam across the Hellespont and once swam for four hours and twenty minutes along the Grand Canal of Venice.

l. 1672. sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell. These were the emblems of pilgrims. The shells on the hat signified that a pilgrim had visited one of the famous shrines.

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## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

WHEN Byron left England for the last time, on April 25, 1816, he went up the Rhine and crossed over to Geneva. There he met Shelley and passed the summer with him most pleasantly. Lake Geneva, or Lake Lemman, as Byron preferred to call it, offered opportunity for the two poets to engage in their favorite pastime of boating. They sailed over the lake from end to end and once were nearly wrecked at Meillerie. On the 26th and 27th of June, while Byron was detained by bad weather at an inn at Ouchy, he wrote *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

For Byron, as for every one who sees it, the Chateau of Chillon became an object of intense interest. Situated on an isolated rock at the eastern end of the lake, its white walls can be seen for miles. It was founded at a very early period, though most of its towers date from the thirteenth century. In the sixteenth century it became famous as the prison of François de Bonnivard, the Genevese author and patriot.

Bonnivard was born near Geneva in 1496 and was educated at Turin. In 1510 he became the prior of St. Victor. In 1519, having ardently maintained the cause of the Genevese against the duke of Savoy, he was arrested and was thrown into prison when the duke entered the city. After two years he was liberated, but in 1530, while travelling in the service of the republic, he was captured by robbers and delivered into the hands

of the duke. For six years he was imprisoned in Chillon, but in 1536 was again liberated by the Genevese. On his return to Geneva, which had now completely emancipated itself, he was received with great honors. He wrote a history of Geneva, and on his death left his books and manuscripts to the city for which he had suffered so bravely.

The dungeon in which Bonnivard was imprisoned is really large and airy and is formed with two aisles like the crypt of a church. There are seven pillars to which prisoners were chained or fettered and one more pillar is half merged in the wall. The pavement is worn by the steps of Bonnivard and other political or religious prisoners who were there incarcerated. The floor of the cell is really about ten feet above the surface of the lake. Through various windows light is reflected from the water and at times the ceiling of the dungeon is tinted with blue.

Byron's story, which he calls a fable is, of course, entirely fictitious; but in a note attached to an early edition he intimated that had he been better acquainted with the character and deeds of Bonnivard, he would have attempted to make his story accord more closely with the historical facts.

At a later date Byron wrote the following sonnet :—

### SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,  
For there thy habitation is the heart—  
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —  
 To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,  
 Their country conquers with their martyrdom,  
 And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.  
 Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,  
 And thy sad steps an altar — for 'twas trod,  
 Until his very steps have left a trace  
 Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,  
 By Bonnivard ! — May none those marks efface !  
 For they appeal from tyranny to God.

## THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

## A FABLE

## I

My hair is gray, but not with years,<sup>o</sup>  
 Nor grew it white  
 In a single night,  
 As men's have grown from sudden fears.  
 My limbs are bowed,<sup>o</sup> though not with toil, 5  
 But rusted with a vile repose,  
 For they have been a dungeon's spoil,  
 And mine has been the fate of those  
 To whom the goodly earth and air  
 Are banned, and barred — forbidden fare ; 10  
 But this<sup>o</sup> was for my father's faith  
 I suffered chains and courted death ;  
 That father perished at the stake  
 For tenets<sup>o</sup> he would not forsake ;  
 And for the same his lineal race 15

In darkness found a dwelling-place ;  
We were seven° — who now are one,  
Six in youth and one in age,  
Finished as they had begun,  
Proud of Persecution's rage ;  
One in fire, and two in field,  
Their belief with blood have sealed,  
Dying as their father died,  
For the God their foes denied ; —  
Three were in a dungeon cast,  
Of whom this wreck° is left the last.

20

25

## II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould°,  
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,  
There are seven columns, massy and gray,  
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,  
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,  
And through the crevice and the cleft  
Of the thick wall is fallen and left ;  
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,  
Like a marsh's meteor lamp° :  
And in each pillar there is a ring,  
And in each ring there is a chain ;  
That iron is a cankering thing,  
For in these limbs its teeth remain,  
With marks that will not wear away,  
Till I have done with this new day°,  
Which now is painful to these eyes,  
Which have not seen the sun so rise  
For years — I cannot count them o'er,

30

35

40

I lost their long and heavy score°  
When my last brother drooped and died,  
And I lay living by his side. 45

## III

They chained us each to a column stone,  
And we were three — yet, each alone :  
We could not move a single pace, 50  
We could not see each other's face,  
But with that pale and livid light  
That made us strangers in our sight :  
And thus together — yet apart,  
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart, 55  
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth  
Of the pure elements of earth,°  
To hearken to each other's speech,  
And each turn comforter° to each  
With some new hope, or legend old, 60  
Or song heroically bold ;  
But even these at length grew cold.  
Our voices took a dreary tone,  
An echo of the dungeon-stone,  
A grating sound — not full and free 65  
As they of yore were wont to be :  
It might be fancy — but to me  
They never sounded like our own.

## IV

I was the eldest of the three,  
And to uphold and cheer the rest 70  
I ought to do — and did — my best

And each did well in his degree.<sup>o</sup>  
 The youngest, whom my father loved,  
 Because our mother's brow was given  
 To him — with eyes as blue as heaven, 75  
 For him my soul was sorely moved<sup>o</sup> :  
 And truly might it be distress'd  
 To see such bird in such a nest ;  
 For he was beautiful as day —  
 (When day was beautiful to me 80  
 As to young eagles, being free) —  
 A polar day, which will not see  
 A sunset till its summer's gone,  
 Its sleepless summer of long light,  
 The snow-clad offspring of the sun : 85  
 And thus he was as pure and bright,  
 And in his natural spirit gay,<sup>o</sup>  
 With tears for nought but others' ills,  
 And then they flowed like mountain rills,  
 Unless he could assuage the woe 90  
 Which he abhorred to view below.<sup>o</sup>

## V

The other was as pure of mind,  
 But formed to combat with his kind  
 Strong in his frame,<sup>o</sup> and of a mood  
 Which 'gainst the world in war had stood, 95  
 And perished in the foremost rank  
 With joy : — but not in chains to pine :  
 His spirit withered with their clank,  
 I saw it silently decline —  
 And perchance in sooth did mine : 100



But yet I forced it on to cheer  
Those relics of a home so dear.<sup>o</sup>  
He was a hunter of the hills,  
    Had followed there the deer and wolf ;  
    To him this dungeon was a gulf, 105  
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

## VI

Lake Lemman<sup>o</sup> lies by Chillon's walls :  
A thousand feet in depth below  
Its massy<sup>o</sup> waters meet and flow ;  
Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110  
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,  
    Which round about the wave intrals :  
A double dungeon wall and wave  
Have made — and like a living grave,  
Below the surface of the lake, 115  
The dark vault lies wherein we lay.  
We heard it ripple night and day ;  
    Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd ;  
And I have felt the winter's spray  
Wash through the bars when winds were high 120  
And wanton in the happy<sup>o</sup> sky ;  
    And then the very rock hath rock'd,  
    And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,  
Because I could have smiled to see  
The death that would have set me free. 125

I said my nearer brother pined,  
I said his mighty heart declined,  
He loathed and put away his food ;

It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,  
For we were used to hunter's fare, 130  
And for the like had little care :  
The milk drawn from the mountain goat  
Was changed for water from the moat,  
Our bread was such as captives' tears  
Have moisten'd many a thousand years, 135  
Since man first pent his fellow-men<sup>o</sup>  
Like brutes within an iron den ;  
But what were these to us or him ?  
These wasted not his heart or limb ;  
My brother's soul was of that mould 140  
Which in a palace had grown cold,  
Had his free breathing been denied  
The range of the steep mountain's side ;  
But why delay the truth ? — he died.  
I saw, and could not hold his head, 145  
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —  
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,  
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.  
He died — and they unlocked his chain,  
And scooped for him a shallow grave 150  
Even from the cold earth of our cave.  
I begged them, as a boon, to lay  
His corse in dust whereon the day  
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,  
But then within my brain it wrought, 155  
That even in death his freeborn breast  
In such a dungeon could not rest.  
I might have spared my idle prayer —  
They coldly laughed — and laid him there :  
The flat and turfless earth above 160

The being we so much did love ;  
His empty chain above it leant,  
Such murder's fitting monument !

## VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,  
Most cherished since his natal hour, 165  
His mother's image in fair face,  
The infant love of all his race,  
His martyred father's dearest thought,  
My latest care, for whom I sought  
To hoard my life,<sup>o</sup> that his might be 170  
Less wretched now, and one day free ;  
He, too, who yet had held untired  
A spirit natural or inspired —  
He, too, was struck, and day by day  
Was withered on the stalk away. 175  
Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing  
To see the human soul take wing  
In any shape, in any mood :  
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,  
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180  
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,  
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed  
Of sin delirious with its dread :  
But these were horrors — this was woe  
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow : 185  
He faded, and so calm and meek,  
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,  
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,  
And grieved for those<sup>o</sup> he left behind ;

With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190  
Was as a mockery<sup>o</sup> of the tomb,  
Whose tints as gently sunk away  
As a departing rainbow's ray —  
An eye of most transparent light,  
That almost made the dungeon bright, 195  
And not a word of murmur — not  
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —  
A little talk of better days,  
A little hope my own to raise,  
For I was sunk in silence — lost 200  
In this last loss, of all the most ;  
And then the sighs he would suppress  
Of fainting nature's feebleness,  
More slowly drawn, grew less and less,  
I listen'd, but I could not hear — 205  
I call'd, for I was wild with fear ;  
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread  
Would not be thus admonished ;  
I call'd and thought I heard a sound —  
I burst my chain with one strong bound,<sup>o</sup> 210  
And rush'd to him : — I found him not,  
I only stirred in this black spot,  
I only lived — *I*<sup>o</sup> only drew  
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew ;  
The last, the sole, the dearest link 215  
Between me and the eternal brink,  
Which bound me to my failing race,  
Was broken in this fatal place.  
One on the earth, and one beneath —  
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe : 220  
I took that hand which lay so still,

Alas ! my own was full as chill ;  
I had not strength to stir, or strive,  
But felt that I was still alive —  
A frantic feeling, when we know 225  
That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why  
I could not die,  
I had no earthly hope — but faith,  
And that forbade a selfish death.° 230

## IX

What next befell me then and there  
I know not well — I never knew —  
First came the loss of light, and air,  
And then of darkness too :  
I had no thought, no feeling — none — 235  
Among the stones I stood a stone,  
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,  
As shrubless crags within the mist ;  
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray ;  
It was not night — it was not day, 240  
It was not even the dungeon-light,  
So hateful to my heavy sight,  
But vacancy absorbing space,  
And fixedness without a place ;  
There were no stars, no earth, no time, 245  
No check, no change, no good, no crime,  
But silence, and a stirless breath  
Which neither was of life nor death ;  
A sea of stagnant idleness,  
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless ! 250

A light broke in upon my brain, —

It was the carol of a bird°;

It ceased, and then it came again,

The sweetest song ear ever heard,

And mine was thankful till my eyes

255

Ran over with the glad surprise,

And they that moment could not see

I was the mate of misery ;

But then by dull degrees came back

My senses to their wonted track ;

260

I saw the dungeon walls and floor

Close slowly round me as before,

I saw the glimmer of the sun

Creeping as it before had done,

But through the crevice where it came

265

That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,

And tamer than upon the tree ;

A lovely bird with azure wings,°

And song that said a thousand things,

And seem'd to say them all for me!

270

I never saw its like before,

I ne'er shall see its likeness more :

It seem'd like me to want a mate,

But was not half so desolate,

And it was come to love me when

275

None lived to love me so again,

And cheering from my dungeon's brink,

Had brought me back to feel and think.

I know not if it late were free,

Or broke its cage to perch on mine,

280

But knowing well captivity,

Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !

Or if it were, in winged guise,  
A visitant from Paradise ;  
For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the while 285  
Which made me both to weep and smile —  
I sometimes deemed that it might be  
My brother's soul come down to me ;  
But then at last away it flew,  
And then 'twas mortal — well I knew, 290  
For he would never thus have flown,  
And left me twice so doubly lone, —  
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,  
Lone — as a solitary cloud,  
A single cloud on a sunny day, 295  
While all the rest of heaven is clear,  
A frown upon the atmosphere,  
That hath no business to appear  
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

## XI

A kind of change came in my fate, 300  
My keepers grew compassionate° ;  
I know not what had made them so,  
They were inured to sights of woe,  
But so it was : — my broken chain  
With links unfastened did remain, 305  
And it was liberty to stride  
Along my cell from side to side,  
And up and down, and then athwart,  
And tread it over every part ;  
And round the pillars one by one, 310  
Returning where my walk begun,

Avoiding only, as I trod,  
My brothers' graves without a sod ;  
For if I thought with heedless tread,  
My step profaned their lowly bed, 315  
My breath came gaspingly and thick,  
And my crush'd heart felt blind and sick.

I made a footing in the wall,°  
It was not therefrom to escape,  
For I had buried one and all 320  
Who loved me in a human shape ;  
And the whole earth would henceforth be  
A wider prison unto me :  
No child — no sire — no kin had I,  
No partner in my misery ; 325  
I thought of this, and I was glad,  
For thought of them had made me mad ;  
But I was curious to ascend  
To my barr'd windows, and to bend  
Once more, upon the mountains high 330  
The quiet of a loving eye.°

## XIII

I saw them — and they were the same,  
They were not changed like me in frame ;  
I saw their thousand years of snow  
On high — their wide long lake below, 335  
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;  
I heard the torrents leap and gush  
O'er channelled rock and broken bush ;  
I saw the white-walled distant town,°  
And whiter sails go skimming down ; 340



And then there was a little isle,<sup>o</sup>  
Which in my very face did smile,  
    The only one in view ;  
A small green isle, it seemed no more,  
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor, 345  
But in it there were three tall trees,  
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,  
And by it there were waters flowing,  
And on it there were young flowers growing,  
    Of gentle breath and hue. 350  
The fish swam by the castle wall,  
And they seemed joyous each and all ;  
The eagle rode the rising blast,  
Methought he never flew so fast  
As then to me he seemed to fly ; 355  
And then new tears<sup>o</sup> came in my eye,  
And I felt troubled — and would fain  
I had not left my recent chain ;  
And when I did descend again,  
The darkness of my dim abode 360  
Fell on me as a heavy load ;  
It was as is a new-dug grave,  
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —  
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,  
Had almost need of such a rest. 365

## XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,  
    I kept no count, I took no note,  
I had no hope my eyes to raise,  
    And clear them of their dreary mote ;

At last men came to set me free, 370  
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,  
It was at length the same to me,  
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,  
I learn'd to love despair.°  
And thus when they appear'd at last, 375  
And all my bonds aside were cast,  
These heavy walls to me had grown  
A hermitage — and all my own !  
And half I felt as they were come  
To tear me from a second home : 380  
With spiders I had friendship made,  
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,  
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,  
And why should I feel less than they ?  
We were all inmates of one place, 385  
And I, the monarch of each race,  
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell° !  
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell —  
My very chains and I grew friends,  
So much a long communion tends 390  
To make us what we are : — even I  
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.°

## NOTES

l. 1. **My hair is gray but not with years.** Byron says Ludovico Sforza's hair turned gray in a single night. Do you know of other cases in literature? How old was the Prisoner at this time?

l. 5. **My limbs are bowed.** Can you describe the Prisoner as you think he appeared at this time? How far had he recovered from the effects of the dungeon? See line 41. Was it best for the author to tell the story in the first person?

l. 11. **This.** Is it the right word? Why *father's* faith?

l. 14. **tenets.** From Latin *teneo*, to hold. It implies that the belief was maintained with determination and firmness.

l. 17. **We were seven.** How many brothers were there, and how did each die?

l. 26. **Wreck.** Most of Byron's heroes are wrecks, but this wreck is sublime.

l. 27. By what rhetorical means does Byron here emphasize the change in subject?

l. 35. **Like a marsh's meteor lamp.** The gas which arises from decaying animal or vegetable matter often becomes luminous. The most familiar instance is the light that glimmers about many kinds of stale fungi. Such decay is the cause of "fox-fire" in rotten wood. In swamps the appearance is especially common; and it is said to have led wanderers with false hope into mud and water from which they have been unable to extricate themselves. In literature it is known as *ignis fatuus*, Friar' Rush's lantern, Will o' the Wisp, etc.

l. 41. *this new day, which now is painful.* Is the Prisoner supposed to have written this immediately after his release?

l. 45. *score.* The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon, and it meant originally *to cut*. It now signifies either a reckoning, or the number twenty. It is supposed that in keeping count by cutting notches on a stick or in a stone that every twentieth number was denoted by a deeper notch or by a cross cut.

Is it not possible that Byron intended the word to suggest the means by which the brothers kept a record of the passage of time? Contrast the last three lines of this stanza with stanzas VIII and IX. These three lines illustrate the condensed style that should be found in brief lyrics such as sonnets. Thought is compressed into the briefest possible compass. It is expected that the imaginative reader will fill in the details from his own experience and be affected thereby perhaps more profoundly than had he assimilated details furnished by the author. One would have been fearful, had Byron expressed an intention to expand these lines, that he would fail to write anything else so good. Yet stanza IX is the best part of this poem and is one of the most famous stanzas in English literature.

l. 57. *pure elements of earth.* Bright waters, sunshine, and air.

l. 59. *comforter.* What was the strongest bond which joined these brothers? Was it misery, family ties, or religion?

l. 72. *in his degree.* Were these adults who were imprisoned? Was there actually much difference in their ages? Does degree signify the relations to each other that had been established in boyhood by their life at home? Was the eldest of the three the eldest of all the brothers and the

youngest of the three the youngest of all? When did the mother die? Were the boys brought up under the austere discipline of a religious fanatic? Was the family circle happy, and was affection mutual and common among all its members? Does not the poet in stanza IV make you think of these things?

l. 76. **my soul was sorely moved.** Was it chiefly for the sake of the father, or the mother, or the younger brother himself, or for some other reason?

l. 87. **gay.** Depict the character of the young brother.

l. 91. How do you like this line?

l. 94. **Strong in his frame.** Would you expect him to endure confinement the longest? Depict his character.

l. 102. Does this line help to interpret stanza IV?

l. 107. **Lake Leman.** *Lacus Lemanus* is the old Latin name for Lake Geneva. It is a body of water forty miles in length and from one and one-half to nine miles in width. At the eastern extremity, not far from Chillon, it is 1056 feet deep. The Rhone enters the lake at the eastern end as a glacier torrent and at the city of Geneva flows out again with a blue and rapid current.

l. 109. **massy.** Probably deep and broad. Cf. line 29.

l. 121. **happy.** Is this the best word?

l. 136. **pent his fellow-men.** Byron never missed an opportunity to speak for liberty. "The object of the poem," wrote Sir Walter Scott, "is to consider captivity in the abstract and to mark its effects in gradually chilling the mental powers and benumbing and freezing the animal frame, until the unfortunate victim becomes, as it were, a part of his dungeon and identified with his chains." By showing captivity in one of its most unjust aspects, Byron hoped to promote reform. He chose to portray imprisonment for the

sake of religion because he thought such imprisonment the most irrational and the least justifiable. Had he been better acquainted with the story of Bonnivard, he would have found the latter's career unsuited to the purposes of his poem, for the old hero was unfortunately wavering and inconsistent in his religious beliefs.

1. 170. **To hoard my life.** Note the effect of *hoard*. Portray the character of the elder brother.

1. 189. **Those.** "There is much delicacy in this plural. By such a fanciful multiplying of survivors the elder brother prevents self-intrusion; himself and his loneliness are, as it were, kept out of sight and forgotten." — HALES.

1. 191. **mockery.** What is this meaning?

1. 210. **I burst my chain with one strong bound.** The climax of the poem.

1. 213. **I.** What effect is sought through this repetition of I?

1. 230. **A selfish death.** His religious scruples prevented his committing suicide.

1. 252. **carol of a bird.** Could such a song have produced such an effect? Is the psychology of the poem accurate?

1. 268. **A lovely bird with azure wings.** To-day bird lore is so popular that a poet would hardly dare introduce under ordinary circumstances a bird without having in mind some definite species. Would it have been better if the Prisoner at this point had spoken of a wren or pewee as having perched on his window-sill?

1. 301. **keepers grew compassionate.** Why do you think the keepers grew compassionate?

1. 318. **I made a footing in the wall.** Would he have made a footing in the wall if the bird had not sung?

1. 331. **The quiet of a loving eye.** Does this line suggest

the attitude of the Prisoner toward nature before he climbed to the window? Does it not rather express the feeling of some meditative person, like Wordsworth, who had lived long in a beautiful region and had become attached to the familiar surroundings?

l. 339. **white-walled distant town.** Villeneuve, an old Roman town.

l. 341. **A little isle.** "Between the entrances of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a small island; the only one I could perceive, in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees (I think not above three), and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view." — BYRON.

l. 356. **new tears.** Why new?

l. 374. **to love despair.** Is the Prisoner, like other heroes of the poet, only a disguise for Byron himself? Is this part of the significance of the "fable"?

l. 387. **strange to tell.** Byron, it is said, had great compassion for the sufferings of animals. In the first canto of *Childe Harold* he called the Spanish national sport a "sweet sight for vulgar eyes," and he expressed much sympathy for the wounded horses and bulls.

l. 392. **Regained my freedom with a sigh.** How much of the Prisoner's individuality is left? Has he become merely a typical prisoner?

## SELECTIONS FROM POEMS

ROBERT BROWNING

### THE LIFE OF ROBERT BROWNING

ROBERT BROWNING, "the subtlest asserter of the soul in song," was imaginer and inventor of a legion of men and women. Except Shakespeare, probably no one else ever bodied forth so many human forms. These fictitious and historical personages, with their vast differences of character, of social rank, and of intellectual fibre, show the breadth of his interests and sympathies. Any live coals among the black attracted him.

In his poems about these people of his it is not the outward events that are to Browning the chief subject of interest. He is a student of mind and heart, a psychologist, and it is in the reactions of the human spirit itself that he finds his field of poetic endeavor. Thus, while another poet of an older day might tell us of a battle, indicating the chief actors and describing the main events and their effects directly and forcibly, Browning would portray the occurrences through the eyes of one of the fighters, show us how the circumstances affected an actual contestant, how he acted and why. This is a modern method, and Browning was one of the pioneers in using it. He believed in nothing so



much as in the human individual. He realized that all progress or regress in society depends upon live souls and what they do and think. Thus, every moment in the mind of an individual, when a moral decision must be made, was to Browning sacred, — a crisis for the world.

The love of nature which in Wordsworth we find supreme is in Browning secondary to a passion for humanity. He is even greatly interested in curious and warped characters if only they be genuine and have confidence in their own ideas and opinions. In this connection Henry van Dyke calls him a carver of gargoyles. (See *My Last Duchess, Up at a Villa — Down in the City.*)

Having selected his characters, Browning often lets one of them talk the poem all out. In the course of his monologue one discovers all the essential facts of the situation, and one sees, besides, what are the opinions and nature of the speaker. He often begins as if the reader or some imaginary person had been engaged in conversation with him for some time. Thus the poem seems but a fragment of the speaker's talk, the heart and core of it, with no introduction or explanation. Understanding this favorite method of Robert Browning, one finds his works less difficult to comprehend.

For one beginning to read him, there remains, however, a difficulty in his use of language, which is so scholarly, so competent, so elliptical, so metaphoric, yet so uncondescending often, that one can only understand it after many times re-reading. One must get acquainted with his mannerisms before one can enjoy any of his longer works. He cared very little to please by exterior beauty

as did the earlier romantic poets. The tendency of his work is to make one look deeper and deeper into things as they are, and not to dwell with delight on expression. In this respect he is a true product of the scientific age in which we live. And in addition, one finds this poet always earnest, vigorous, profound, discriminating; and often exquisite, inspiring, and splendid.

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, one of the suburbs of London, in 1812. Among the groves still standing thereabout, he played and walked as a child, and there he composed some of his poems. In his early years he had many pet animals, and he was fond of collecting scientific material. His love for stories was fostered by the habits and tastes of his father and mother, and in his father's library were laid the foundations of that thorough culture and scholarship which his books evince. His father was a bank clerk, who delighted in books and constantly bought and read them. He delighted in his two children no less, and when Robert was a little fellow his father used to take him in his arms and walk to and fro in the dusky firelit library of an evening, singing him Greek odes to an old tune which was a favorite of his. Thus, too, was the tale of the Fall of Troy taught to the child and amply illustrated by the dog and cat and the red coals in the grate. From his mother, an earnest Scotch woman, he heard the old Highland lyrics so full of passionate sadness. All the father's reading was shared with the son. From intellectual beginnings such as these he was able, without much experience in the schools, to make, under tutors, rapid advances in education. It was characteristic of him that he liked and studied everything. He learned to fence, to box, to

ride, and to dance; he visited art galleries; he took lessons in cast drawing; he became able to converse in French; he made a study of music; he saw plays in the theatres, and took part in amateur dramatics. So strongly did all these things appeal to him that he found it hard to decide upon a career. It seemed that he might be musician, writer, or painter, as he chose.

From early childhood he had followed his father's example in composing verses, and would go around the table making rhymes and spanning off the accents with his palm on the edge of the table. When he was twenty years old, his first long poem, *Pauline*, was published anonymously at the expense of his aunt, but it attracted little attention. A few years later, after a period of residence at the Russian capital, he brought out *Paracelsus*, a poem based on the ideas of the scientist of that name, who was called "the father of modern chemistry." For this work he made extensive studies of the life and times of Paracelsus in the British Museum libraries.

At the request of his friend, the actor Macready, Browning now wrote him a play, choosing as his theme the loyalty of the Earl of Strafford to his exceedingly difficult master, Charles I. This was staged and was reasonably successful.

Plans for the long poem, *Sordello*, were now made, and he spent two years in Italy in enthusiastic study and travel. "Italy," he used to say, "was my university." *Sordello* was an Italian poet or troubadour of the time when the allegiance of the people was divided between Emperor and Pope. The publication of *Sordello* did little to increase the fame of its writer on account of its

style, which is at once compressed and discursive. It has beautiful passages, but they cannot be separated from the rest and still be understood.

Soon followed *Pippa Passes*, a group of four dramatic episodes, all brought to their better ending by the unconscious influence of Pippa, a young mill-worker, who, singing, passes by on her only holiday of the year. In this period were also published *King Victor and King Charles*, *The Return of the Druses*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *Luria*, and *A Soul's Tragedy*. All these and some shorter poems grouped as *Dramatic Lyrics* and *Dramatic Romances* were brought out in cheap paper covers in a series he called *Bells and Pomegranates*, referring to the embroidered border of the high priest's robe (*Exodus* xxviii. 33-34). Situations in Italian history furnish the themes for most of these poems and dramas; though, as usual, the incidents are merely frames for the pictures of souls of men in the grip of some passion or difficulty. We see them aspiring, erring, failing, submitting, renouncing, fighting, achieving,—alive and human to their finger-tips, and painted in wonderful colors of philosophy and sympathy. These poems clearly show Browning's vigor of thought and feeling. He did not care to be popular, but wrote for humanity. He himself says of his *Sordello*, "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study." It is often said that to him the world was a great laboratory of souls where experiments were constantly being tried. He liked to ask himself: How would this man act under such or such conditions? Would he be true to the highest principles, or would he excuse himself and fail? Examples of these

tests of men's character may be found among the selections in this book.

In 1846 Robert Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, the poet, and took her at once to Italy, where they spent the greater part of the fifteen years before the death of Mrs. Browning. Though an invalid, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a woman of deep learning. Few women, if any, have surpassed her in poetry. Her personality was a rare one, delicate, strong, intelligent, tender, and beautiful, and her married life is commonly referred to as an example of the most perfect human companionship. At this time Browning wrote many of the shorter poems published in his collections called *Men and Women* and *Dramatis Personæ*. He had also in mind the idea of his greatest work, *The Ring and the Book*. This he completed while residing in England with his father and his sister, after the death of his wife. Its twelve books relate in an unusual way a story of Italian intrigue and crime and loyalty and justice. Each book tells what one person, more or less concerned in the case, has to say about it. The characters thus revealed of Pompilia, of Caponracchi, and of the Pope are among the finest drawn in all literature. This poem and *Sordello*, and in a less degree some others, are difficult to understand without considerable study, because of the very intimate knowledge of Italian history and politics which Browning possessed and used without explanations.

There followed a period of composition upon the themes of Greek tragedy, which had always so deeply attracted Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Embodied in his poems *Balaustion's Adventure* and its sequel *Aristophanes' Apology* occur transcripts of the *Alcestis* and

the *Hercules* of Euripides. He also translated in prose the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus.

The later life of Browning was occupied with many long poems of less strength and beauty, — *Red Cotton Nightcap Country*, *Fifine at the Fair*, *The Inn Album*, and others. A tardy fame had come to him. Admired and beloved, and enjoying the intimate friendship of many fine personalities, he approached old age. His son's home in an old Venetian palace claimed much of his time, but he loved the village of Asolo which he had discovered in his youth. He had made arrangements for the purchase of a home there, and had named his last volume of poems *Asolando* in honor of Asolo, when at the home of his son in Venice he died, December 12, 1889. He was buried December 31 in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

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## ROBERT BROWNING

### CAVALIER TUNES

#### I. MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng<sup>o</sup> stood for his King,  
 Bidding the crop-headed<sup>o</sup> Parliament swing :  
 And, pressing a troop unable to stoop  
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,  
 Marched them along, fifty score strong, 5  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles ! Pym<sup>o</sup> and such carles  
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles<sup>o</sup> !  
 Cavaliers, up ! Lips from the cup,  
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup 10  
 Till you're —

CHORUS. — Marching along, fifty score strong,  
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden<sup>o</sup> to hell, and his obsequies knell.  
 Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well ! 15  
 England, good cheer ! Rupert<sup>o</sup> is near !  
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,



CHO. — Marching along, fifty score strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Then, God for King Charles ! Pym and his snarls 20  
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles !  
Hold by the right, you double your might ;  
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

CHO. — March we along, fifty score strong,  
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song ! 25

## II. GIVE A ROUSE

### I

King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?  
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ?  
Give a rouse<sup>o</sup> : here's, in hell's despite now,  
King Charles !

### II

Who gave me the goods that went since ? 5  
Who rais'd me the house that sank once ?  
Who helped me to gold I spent since ?  
Who found me in wine you drank once ?

CHO. — King Charles, and who'll do him right now ?  
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now ? 10  
Give a rouse : here's, in hell's despite now,  
King Charles !



## III

To whom used my boy George quaff else,  
By the old fool's side that begot him?  
For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15  
While Noll's<sup>o</sup> damned troopers shot him?

CHO. — King Charles, and who'll do him right now?  
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?  
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,  
King Charles! 20

## III. BOOT AND SADDLE

## I

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!  
Rescue my castle before the hot day  
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

## II

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say; 5  
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray  
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

## III

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,  
 Flouts castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array : 10  
 Who laughs, " Good fellows ere this, by my fay,°

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !"

## IV

Who? My wife Gertrude ; that, honest and gay,  
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering, " Nay !  
 I've better counsellors ; what counsel they ? 15

CHO. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away !"

## THE LOST LEADER

JUST for a handful of silver he left us,  
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat —  
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,  
 Lost all the others she lets us devote° ;  
 They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, 5  
 So much was theirs who so little allowed ;  
 How all our copper had gone for his service !  
 Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud !  
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honored  
 him,  
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10  
 Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,  
 Made him our pattern to live and to die !

Shakespeare was of us,<sup>o</sup> Milton was for us,  
Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from  
their graves !

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen, 15  
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !

We shall march prospering — not through his presence ;  
Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre ;

Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his quiescence,<sup>o</sup>  
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire : 20

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,  
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,

One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,  
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God !

Life's night begins : let him never come back to us ! 25  
There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,

Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,  
Never glad confident morning again !

Best<sup>o</sup> fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,  
Menace<sup>o</sup> our heart ere we master his own ; 30

Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,  
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne !

## HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

[16—]

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;  
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;  
“ Good speed ! ” cried the watch,<sup>o</sup> as the gate-bolts  
undrew ;

“Speed !” echoed the wall to us galloping through ;  
Behind shut the postern,<sup>o</sup> the lights sank to rest,      5  
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace  
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our  
place ;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths<sup>o</sup> tight,  
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right, 10  
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,  
Nor galloped<sup>o</sup> less steadily Roland a whit.

’Twas moonset at starting ; but while we drew near .  
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear ;  
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ;      15  
At Düffeld, ’twas morning as plain as could be ;  
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-  
chime,  
So, Joris broke silence with, “ Yet there is time !”

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,  
And against him the cattle stood black every one,      20  
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,  
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,  
With resolute shoulders, each butting away  
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray :

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent  
back      25

For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track ;  
And one eyes’ black intelligence, — ever that glance  
O’er its white edge at me, his own master, askance !

And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon  
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on. 30

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay  
spur!

Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,  
We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick  
wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering  
knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank, 35  
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,  
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;  
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,  
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like  
chaff; 40

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,<sup>o</sup>  
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" — and all in a moment his  
roan

Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;  
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight 45  
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,  
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,  
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat,<sup>o</sup> each holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots,<sup>o</sup> let go belt and all, 50  
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,

Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without  
peer;  
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad  
or good,  
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, — friends flocking round 55  
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;  
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,  
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,  
Which (the burgesses<sup>o</sup> voted by common consent)  
Was no more than his due who brought good news  
from Ghent. 60

### HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

OH, to be in England  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf 5  
Round the elm-tree bole<sup>o</sup> are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
In England — now!  
And after April, when May follows,  
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows! 10  
Hark! where my blossomed pear tree in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —  
That's the wise thrush<sup>o</sup>; he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture 15

The first fine careless rapture!  
 And though the fields look rough with hoary<sup>o</sup> dew,  
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew  
 The buttercups, the little children's dower  
 — Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower ! 20

### HOME THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

NOBLY, nobly, Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest  
 died away ;  
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz  
 Bay ;  
 Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar  
 lay ;  
 In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar  
 grand and gray ;  
 " Here and here did England help me : how can I help  
 England ? " — say,<sup>o</sup> 5  
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God and pray,<sup>o</sup>  
 While Jove's planet<sup>o</sup> rises yonder, silent over Africa.

### INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon :  
 A mile or so away  
 On a little mound, Napoleon  
 Stood on our storming-day ;  
 With neck out-thrust, you fancy how, 5  
 Legs wide, arms locked behind,  
 As if to balance the prone brow<sup>o</sup>  
 Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused " My plans  
That soar, to earth may fall, 10  
Let once my army-leader Lannes  
Waver at yonder wall " —  
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew  
A rider, bound on bound  
Full-galloping ; nor bridle drew 15  
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,  
And held himself erect  
By just his horse's mane, a boy :  
You hardly could suspect — 20  
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,  
Scarce any blood came through)  
You looked twice ere you saw his breast  
Was all but shot in two.

" Well," cried he, " Emperor, by God's grace 25  
We've got you Ratisbon !  
The Marshal's in the market-place,  
And you'll be there anon  
To see your flag-bird flap his vans°  
Where I, to heart's desire, 30  
Perched him ! " The chief's eye flashed ; his plans  
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed ; but presently  
Softened itself, as sheathes  
A film the mother-eagle's eye 35  
When her bruised eaglet breathes.  
" You're wounded ! " " Nay," the soldier's pride



Touched to the quick, he said :  
“ I’m killed, Sire ! ” And his chief beside,  
Smiling, the boy fell dead.°

40

## HERVÉ RIEL

ON the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-  
two,  
Did the English fight the French, — woe to France !  
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro’ the blue,  
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks  
pursue,  
Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo on the  
Rance, 5  
With the English fleet in view.

’Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in  
full chase ;  
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,  
Damfreville ;  
Close on him fled, great and small,  
Twenty-two good ships in all ; 10  
And they signalled to the place  
“ Help the winners of a race !  
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick —  
or, quicker still,  
Here’s the English can and will ! ”

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt  
on board ; 15  
“ Why, what hope or chance have ships like these  
to pass ? ” laughed they :

“ Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage  
scarred and scored,  
Shall the ‘*Formidable*’ here, with her twelve and eighty  
guns

Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow  
way,

Trust to enter where ’tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,  
And with flow at full beside ?

21

Now ’tis slackest ebb of tide.

Reach the mooring ? Rather say,

While rock stands or water runs,

Not a ship will leave the bay ! ”

25

Then was called a council straight.

Brief and bitter the debate :

“ Here’s the English at our heels ; would you have  
them take in tow

All that’s left us of the fleet, linked together stern and  
bow,

For a prize to Plymouth Sound ?

30

Better run the ships aground ! ”

(Ended Damfreville his speech.)

Not a minute more to wait !

“ Let the Captains all and each

Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the  
beach !

35

France must undergo her fate.

“ Give the word ! ” But no such word

Was ever spoke or heard ;

For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all  
these°

— A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate — first, second, third? 40

No such man of mark, and meet

With his betters to compete!

But a simple Breton sailor pressed° by Tourville for the fleet,

A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.°

And, "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries

Hervé Riel: 45

"Are you mad, you Malouins°? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?

Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell

On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell

'Twixt the offing° here and Grève° where the river disembogues°?

Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for? 50

Morn and eve, night and day,

Have I piloted your bay,

Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.°

Burn° the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hagues!

Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way! 55

Only let me lead the line,

Have the biggest ship to steer,

Get this '*Formidable*' clear,

Make the others follow mine,

And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well, 60

Right to Solidor past Grève,  
And there lay them safe and sound ;  
And if one ship misbehave,  
— Keel so much as grate the ground,  
Why, I've nothing but my life, — here's my head ! ”  
cries Hervé Riel. 65

Not a minute more to wait.  
“ Steer us in then, small and great !  
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron ! ”  
cried its chief.

Captains, give the sailor place !  
He is Admiral, in brief. 70

Still the north-wind, by God's grace !  
See the noble fellow's face  
As the big ship, with a bound,  
Clears the entry like a hound,  
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide  
sea's profound ! 75

See, safe thro' shoal and rock,  
How they follow in a flock,  
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the  
ground,

Not a spar that comes to grief !  
The peril, see, is past, 80  
All are harbored to the last,  
And just as Hervé Riel hollas “ Anchor ! ” — sure as fate  
Up the English come, too late !

So, the storm subsides to calm :  
They see the green trees wave 85  
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.

Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.

“Just our rapture to enhance,

Let the English rake the bay,<sup>o</sup>

Gnash their teeth and glare askance

90

As they cannonade away!

’Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!”

How hope succeeds despair on each Captain’s countenance!

Out burst all with one accord,

“This is Paradise for Hell!

95

Let France, let France’s King

Thank the man that did the thing<sup>o</sup>!”

What a shout, and all one word,

“Hervé Riel!”

As he stepped in front once more,

100

Not a symptom of surprise

In the frank blue Breton eyes,

Just the same man as before.

Then said Damfreville, “My friend,

I must speak out at the end,

105

Tho’ I find the speaking hard.

Praise is deeper than the lips:

You have saved the King his ships,

You must name your own reward.

’Faith our sun was near eclipse!

110

Demand whate’er you will,

France remains your debtor still.

Ask to heart’s content and have! or my name’s not  
Damfreville.”

Then a beam of fun outbroke

On the bearded mouth that spoke,

115

As the honest heart laughed through

Those frank eyes of Breton blue :

“ Since I needs must say my say,

Since on board the duty's done,

And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it  
but a run ? —

120

Since 'tis ask and have, I may —

Since the others go ashore —

Come ! A good whole holiday !

Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle  
Aurore° ! ”

That he asked and that he got, — nothing more. 125

Name and deed alike are lost :

Not a pillar nor a post

In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell ;

Not a head in white and black

On a single fishing smack, 130

In memory of the man but for whom had gone to  
wrack

All that France saved from the fight whence England  
bore the bell.

Go to Paris : rank on rank

Search the heroes flung pell-mell

On the Louvre, face and flank ! 135

You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé  
Riel.

So, for better and for worse,

Hervé Riel, accept my verse° !

In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more

Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife the  
Belle Aurore ! 140

## PHEIDIPPIDES

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν<sup>ο</sup>

FIRST I salute<sup>ο</sup> this soil of the blessed, river and rock !  
 Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to  
 all !

Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal  
 in praise

— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis  
 and spear !

Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your  
 peer,

Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest to whom I  
 upraise

Hand and heart and voice ! For Athens, leave pasture  
 and flock !

Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call !

Archons<sup>ο</sup> of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return !  
 See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no spectre that  
 speaks !

Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me,  
 Athens and you,

“ Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid !  
 Persia has come, we are here, where is She ? ” Your  
 command I obeyed,

Ran and raced : like stubble, some field which a fire  
 runs through,

Was the space between city and city : two days, two  
 nights did I burn

Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke : breath served but for “ Persia  
has come !

Persia bids Athens proffer slaves’-tribute, water and  
earth ;

Razed to the ground is Eretria° — but Athens, shall  
Athens sink,

Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly  
die, 20

Die with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid,  
the stander-by ?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch  
o’er destruction’s brink ?

How, — when ? No care for my limbs ! — there’s  
lightning in all and some —

Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it  
birth ! ”

O my Athens — Sparta love thee° ? Did Sparta  
respond ? 25

Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mis-  
trust,

Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of grati-  
fied hate !

Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses.  
I stood

Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an  
inch from dry wood :

“ Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they  
debate ? 30

Thunder, thou Zeus ! Athene, are Spartans a quarry  
beyond

Swing of thy spear ? Phoibos and Artemis, clang  
them ‘ Ye must ’ ! ”



No bolt launched from Olumpo<sup>s</sup>! Lo, their answer  
at last!

“Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may  
Sparta befriend?

Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue  
at stake! 35

Count we no time lost time which lags thro’ respect to  
the Gods!

Ponder that precept of old, ‘No warfare, whatever the  
odds

In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is un-  
able to take

Full-circle her state in the sky!’ Already she rounds  
to it fast:

Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment  
suspend.” 40

Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I had  
mouldered to ash!

That sent a blaze thro’ my blood; off, off and away  
was I back,

— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false  
and the vile!

Yet “O Gods of my land!” I cried, as each hillock  
and plain,

Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them  
again, 45

“Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we  
paid you erewhile?

Vain was the filleted victim,<sup>o</sup> the fulsome libation!  
Too rash

Love in his choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

“Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease to en-  
wreathe  
Brows made bold by your leaf ! Fade at the Persian’s  
foot, 50  
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never  
adorn a slave !  
Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild waste  
tract !  
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain ! What matter if  
slackd  
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to  
cave  
No deity deigns to drape with verdure ? — at least I  
can breathe, 55  
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the  
mute ! ”

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes’ ridge ;  
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a  
bar  
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the  
way.  
Right ! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure  
across : 60  
“Where I could enter, there I depart by ! Night in  
the fosse° ?  
Athens to aid ? Tho’ the dive were thro’ Erebos, thus  
I obey —  
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise !  
No bridge  
Better ! ” — when — ha ! what was it I came on, of  
wonders that are ?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestic  
Pan !

65

Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned  
his hoof ;

All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly  
— the curl

Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's  
awe

As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I  
saw.

“ Halt, Pheidippides ! ” — halt I did, my brain of a  
whirl :

70

“ Hither to me ! Why pale in my presence ? ” he  
gracious began :

“ How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof ?

“ Athens, she only, rears me no fane,° makes me no  
feast !

Wherefore ? Than I what godship to Athens more  
helpful of old ?

Ay, and still, and forever her friend ! Test Pan, trust  
me !

75

Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have  
faith

In the temples and tombs ! Go, say to Athens, ‘ The  
Goat-God saith :

When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is  
cast in the sea,

Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your  
most and least,°

Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the  
free and the bold ! ’

80

“ Say Pan saith : ‘ Let this, foreshowing the place, be  
the pledge ! ’ ”

(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear  
— Fennel, — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — what-  
ever it bode),

“ While, as for thee . . . ” But enough ! He was  
gone. If I ran hitherto —

Be sure that the rest of my journey, I ran no longer,  
but flew. 85

Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my road ;  
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on  
the razor’s edge !

Pan for Athens, Pan for me ! I too have a guerdon  
rare !

---

Then spoke Miltiades. “ And thee, best runner of  
Greece,

Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised  
thyself ? 90

Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands  
of her son ! ”

Rosily blushed the youth : he paused : but, lifting at  
length

His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered  
the rest of his strength

Into the utterance — “ Pan spoke thus : ‘ For what  
thou hast done

Count on a worthy reward ! Henceforth be allowed  
thee release 95

From the racer’s toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in  
pelf ! ’

“ I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to  
my mind !  
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel  
may grow, —  
Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under  
the deep,  
Whelm her away forever ; and then, — no Athens to  
save, — 100  
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the  
brave, —  
Hie to my house and home : and, when my children  
shall creep  
Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful  
yet kind,  
Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding  
him — so ! ”

---

Unforeseeing one ! Yes, he fought on the Marathon  
day : 105  
So, when Persia was dust, all cried “ To Akropolis !  
Run, Pheidippides, one race more ! the meed is thy  
due !  
‘ Athens is saved, thank Pan,’ go shout ! ” He flung  
down his shield,  
Ran like fire once more : and the space ’twixt the  
Fennel-field,  
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire  
runs through, 110  
Till in he broke : “ Rejoice, we conquer ! ” Like wine  
thro’ clay,  
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss !

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of  
 salute  
 Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought rejoicing  
 indeed.  
 So is Pheidippides happy forever, — the noble strong  
 man 115  
 Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom  
 a god loved so well,  
 He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was  
 suffered to tell  
 Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he  
 began,  
 So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be  
 mute:  
 "Athens is saved!" — Pheidippides dies in the shout  
 for his deed. 120

## MY LAST DUCHESS

### FERRARA

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
 Looking as if she were alive. I call  
 That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's° hands  
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said 5  
 "Frà Pandolf" by design: for never read  
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10

And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps 15  
Frà Pandolf chanced to say " Her mantle laps  
Over my lady's wrist too much," or " Paint  
Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff  
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20  
For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,  
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.  
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, 25  
The dropping of the daylight in the West,  
The bough of cherries some officious fool  
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
She rode with round the terrace — all and each  
Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30  
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but  
thanked  
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked  
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name  
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35  
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will  
Quite clear to such an one, and say, " Just this  
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
Or there exceed the mark " — and if she let  
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40  
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,

— E'en then would be some stooping ; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her ; but who passed without 44  
 Much the same smile ? This grew ; I gave commands<sup>o</sup> ;  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will't please you rise ? We'll meet  
 The company below, then. I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50  
 Of mine for dowry<sup>o</sup> will be disallowed ;  
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me<sup>o</sup> !

### UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

*(As distinguished by an Italian person of quality.)*

HAD I but plenty of money, money enough and to  
 spare,  
 The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city  
 square ;  
 Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window  
 there !  
 Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at  
 least ! 4  
 There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast ;  
 While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more  
 than a beast.



Well now, look at our villa ! stuck like the horn of a  
bull

Just on a mountain edge as bare as the creature's skull,  
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull !  
— I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's  
turned wool. 10

But the city, oh the city — the square with the houses !  
Why ?

They are stone-faced, white as a curd,° there's some-  
thing to take the eye !

Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry ;  
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who  
hurries by ;

Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the  
sun gets high ; 15

And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted  
properly.

What of a villa ? Tho' winter be over in March by  
rights,

'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered  
well off the heights :

You've the brown ploughed land before, where the  
oxen steam and wheeze,

And the hills over-smoked° behind by the faint gray  
olive trees. 20

Is it better in May, I ask you ? You've summer all  
at once ;

In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April  
suns.

'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three  
fingers well,  
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great  
red bell  
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to  
pick and sell. 25

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to  
spout and splash!  
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such  
foam-bows flash  
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and  
paddle and pash  
Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty gazers do not  
abash,<sup>o</sup>  
Tho' all that she wears is some weeds round her waist  
in a sort of sash. 30

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though  
you linger,  
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted  
forefinger.  
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn  
and mingle,  
Or thrid<sup>o</sup> the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem  
a-tingle.  
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala<sup>o</sup>  
is shrill, 35  
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the  
resinous firs on the hill.  
Enough of the seasons, — I spare you the months of  
the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church bells begin :

No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence<sup>o</sup> rattles in :  
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin. 40

By and by there's the travelling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth ;

Or the Pulcinello-trumpet<sup>o</sup> breaks up the market beneath.

At the post-office such a scene-picture<sup>o</sup> — the new play, piping hot !

And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes, 45

And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's !

Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,

Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, St. Jerome and Cicero,<sup>o</sup>

“ And moreover ” (the sonnet goes rhyming), “ the skirts of St. Paul has reached,

Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous<sup>o</sup> than ever he preached.” 50

Noon strikes, — here sweeps the procession<sup>o</sup> ! our Lady borne smiling and smart.

With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords<sup>o</sup> stuck in her heart !

*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife ;  
No keeping one's haunches still : it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear ! fowls, wine, at  
double the rate. 55

They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil  
pays passing the gate

It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me,  
not the city !

Beggars can scarcely be choosers : but still — ah, the  
pity, the pity !

Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with  
cowls and sandals,

And the penitents<sup>o</sup> dressed in white shirts, a-holding  
the yellow candles ; 60

One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross  
with handles,

And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better  
prevention of scandals :

*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.

Oh, a day in the city square, there is no such pleasure  
in life !

### THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon, and night,  
“ Praise God ! ” sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,  
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well ; . 5  
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,  
He stopped and sang, “ Praise God ! ”

Then back again his curls he threw,  
And cheerful turned to work anew. 10

Said Blaise, the listening monk, " Well done ;  
I doubt not thou art heard, my son :

" As well as if thy voice to-day  
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

" This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome 15  
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, " Would God that I  
Might praise Him that great way, and die ! "

Night passed, day shone,  
And Theocrite was gone. 20

With God a day endures alway,  
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, " Nor day nor night  
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel,<sup>o</sup> like a rainbow's birth, 25  
Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,  
Lived there, and played the craftsman well ;

And morning, evening, noon, and night,  
Praised God in place of Theocrite. 30

And from a boy, to youth he grew :  
The man put off the stripling's hue :

The man matured and fell away  
Into the season of decay :

And ever o'er the trade he bent, 35  
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one  
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, " A praise is in mine ear ;  
There is no doubt in it, no fear : 40

" So sing old worlds, and so  
New worlds that from my footstool go.

" Clearer loves sound other ways :  
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell 45  
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter day : he flew to Rome,  
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by  
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,  
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite :

And all his past career  
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade, 55  
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,  
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear,  
He grew a priest, and now stood here. 60

To the East with praise he turned,  
And on his sight the angel burned.

“ I bore thee from thy craftsman’s cell,  
And set thee here ; I did not well.

“ Vainly I left my angel-sphere, 65  
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

“ Thy voice’s praise seemed weak ; it dropped —  
Creation’s chorus stopped !

“ Go back and praise again  
The early way, while I remain. 70

“ With that weak voice of our disdain,  
Take up creation’s pausing strain.

“ Back to the cell and poor employ :  
Resume the craftsman and the boy ! ”

Theocrite grew old at home ;  
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

75

One vanished as the other died :  
They sought God side by side.

### EVELYN HOPE

BEAUTIFUL Evelyn Hope is dead !  
Sit and watch by her side an hour.  
That is her book-shelf, this her bed ;  
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,  
Beginning to die too, in the glass ;  
Little has yet been changed, I think :  
The shutters are shut, no light may pass  
Save two long rays thro' the hinge's chink.

5

Sixteen years old when she died !  
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name ;  
It was not her time to love ; beside,  
Her life had many a hope and aim,  
Duties enough and little cares,  
And now was quiet, now astir,  
Till God's hand beckoned unawares, —  
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

10

15

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope ?  
What, your soul was pure and true,  
The good stars met in your horoscope,  
Made you of spirit, fire and dew —

20



And just because I was thrice as old  
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,  
Each was naught to each, must I be told?  
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above 25  
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,  
And creates the love to reward the love:  
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!  
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
Thro' worlds I shall traverse, not a few: 30  
Much is to learn, much to forget  
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come,° at last it will,  
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)  
In the lower earth in the years long still, 35  
That body and soul so pure and gay?  
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,°  
And your mouth of your own geranium's red —  
And what you would do with me, in fine,  
In the new life come in the old one's stead. 40

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,  
Given up myself so many times,  
Gained me the gains of various men,  
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;  
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope, 45  
Either I missed or itself missed me:  
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!  
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while !

My heart seemed full as it could hold ; 50

There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,

And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.

So hush, — I will give you this leaf to keep :

See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand !

There, that is our secret : go to sleep ! 55

You will wake, and remember, and understand.

## ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

### I

THERE they are, my fifty men and women

Naming me° the fifty poems finished !

Take them, Love, the book and me together ;

Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

### II

Rafael made a century of sonnets,° 5

Made and wrote them in a certain volume

Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil

Else he only used to draw Madonnas ;

These, the world might view — but one, the volume.

Who that one, you ask ? Your heart instructs you. 10

Did she live and love it all her lifetime ?

Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,

Die, and let it drop beside her pillow

Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,

Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving — 15  
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,  
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

## III

You and I would rather read that volume  
(Taken to his beating bosom by it),  
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael, 20  
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas° —  
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,  
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,  
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre —  
Seen by us and all the world in circle. 25

## IV

You and I will never read that volume.  
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple,  
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.  
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna 29  
Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!"  
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

## V

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:  
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice.°"  
While he mused and traced it and retraced it  
(Peradventure with a pen corroded 35  
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,  
When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,  
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,

Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,  
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle, 40  
Let the wretch go festering through Florence) —  
Dante, who loved well because he hated,  
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,  
Dante, standing, studying his angel, —  
In there broke the folk of his Inferno. 45  
Says he — “ Certain people of importance ”  
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)  
“ Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.”  
Says the poet — “ Then I stopped my painting.”

## VI

You and I would rather see that angel, 50  
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
Would we not? — than read a fresh Inferno.

## VII

You and I will never see that picture.  
While he mused on love and Beatrice,  
While he softened o'er his outlined angel, 55  
In they broke, those “ people of importance ”  
We and Bice° bear the loss forever.

## VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?  
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not  
Once, and only once, and for one only, 60  
(Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language  
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient —

Using nature that's an art to others,  
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.  
Ay, of all the artists living, loving, 65  
None but would forego his proper dowry, —  
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,  
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture, —  
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,  
Once, and only once, and for one only, 70  
So to be the man and leave the artist,  
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

## IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!  
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,  
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him, 75  
Even he, the minute makes immortal,  
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,  
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.  
While he smites, how can he but remember,  
So he smote before, in such a peril, 80  
When they stood and mocked — "Shall smiting help  
us?"  
When they drank and sneered — "A stroke is easy!"  
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,  
Throwing him for thanks — "But drought was pleas-  
ant."  
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph; 85  
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;  
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;  
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,  
Carelessness or consciousness — the gesture.

For he bears an ancient wrong about him, 90  
 Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,  
 Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude —  
 "How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save  
 us?"

Guesses what is like to prove the sequel —  
 "Egypt's flesh-pots — nay, the drought was better." 95

## X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!  
 Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,  
 Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.  
 Never dares the man put off the prophet.

## XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands, 100  
 (Were she Jethro's daughter,<sup>o</sup> white and wifely,  
 Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave),  
 He would envy yon dumb, patient camel,  
 Keeping a reserve of scanty water  
 Meant to save his own life in the desert; 105  
 Ready in the desert to deliver  
 (Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)  
 Hoard and life together for his mistress.

## XII

I shall never, in the years remaining,  
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues, 110  
 Make you music that should all-express me;  
 So it seems; I stand on my attainment.

This of verse alone, one life allows me ;  
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.  
Other heights in other lives, God willing ; 115  
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love.

## XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us —  
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.  
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,  
Lines I write the first time and the last time. 120  
He who works in fresco steals a hair-brush,  
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,  
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,  
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,  
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets, 125  
He who blows through bronze may breathe through  
silver,  
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.  
He who writes, may write for once as I do.

## XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,  
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy, 130  
Enter each and all, and use their service,  
Speak from every mouth, — the speech, a poem.  
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,  
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving :  
I am mine and yours — the rest be all men's, 135  
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.  
Let me speak this once in my true person,  
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,

Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence :  
Pray you, look on these my men and women, 140  
Take and keep my fifty poems finished ;  
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also !  
Poor the speech ; be how I speak, for all things.

## XV

Not but that you know me ! Lo, the moon's self !  
Here in London, yonder late in Florence, 145  
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.  
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,  
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,  
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.  
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato, 150  
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,  
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.  
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,  
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,  
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver, 155  
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

## XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy ?  
Nay : for if that moon could love a mortal,  
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),  
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos), 160  
She would turn a new side to her mortal,  
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman, —  
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,  
Blind to Galileo on his turret,  
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats° — him, even ! 165



Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal —  
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,  
Opens out anew for worse or better !  
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg  
Swimming full upon the ship it founders, 170  
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals ?  
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire,  
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain ?  
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu  
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest, 175  
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.  
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness  
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,  
When they ate and drank and saw God also !

## XVII

What were seen ? None knows, none ever will know.  
Only this is sure — the sight were other, 181  
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,  
Dying now impoverished here in London.  
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures  
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with, 185  
One to show a woman when he loves her.

## XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love !  
This to you — yourself my moon of poets !  
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,  
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you !  
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you — 191  
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.

But the best is when I glide from out them,  
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
Come out on the other side, the novel  
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

195

## XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,  
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,  
Wrote one song — and in my brain I sing it,  
Drew one angel — borne, see, on my bosom !

200

## NOTES

### CAVALIER TUNES

#### I. *Marching Along.*

The ability of Browning to enter into the minds of all sorts of people, his dramatic tendency, is evident here; for he was more in sympathy with the progressive and liberal ideas of Cromwell than of the Cavaliers, yet he could assume the personality of the Cavaliers and think their thoughts.

1. 1. Sir Byng raised a troop of royalist soldiery and joined Charles I at Nottingham in 1642 just before the battle of Edgehill.

1. 2. The Parliament is called crop-headed because the Puritans disdained the long, curled locks of the Cavaliers and wore their hair cut close to the head.

1. 7. John Pym was a leader of Parliament in its resistance to the king's tyranny. Charles. Fellows.

1. 8. *parles*. Parliaments or consultations.

1. 14. *Hampden*. Hampden, Hazelrig, Fiennes, young Harry (son of Sir Henry Vane), were also leaders of the Independent party.

1. 16. Prince Rupert of Bavaria, a nephew of Charles I, was a bold royalist cavalry leader.

Note the spirited marching metre. These songs suggest the romantic, convivial, and haughty nature of the Cavaliers.

#### II. *Give a Rouse*

1. 3. *rouse*. A shout of approval in answer to the toast.

1. 16. *Noll*. A nickname for Oliver Cromwell.

III. *Boot and Saddle*

Castle Bracepeth, near Durham, is represented here as being held by a woman against the Roundheads until her husband and his troop arrive.

l. 11. *fay*. Faith.

What does the metre suggest?

## THE LOST LEADER

This poem is one of Browning's earlier lyric monologues in which an imaginary speaker resents the desertion from the people's party of a famous poet who had been won over from his former opinions by royal gifts.

The occasion of the poem was the appointment of Wordsworth as poet laureate by the king after his change of politics from liberal to conservative. Browning often stated that the poem was a piece of fiction in the sense that he did not intend to picture the personality of Wordsworth or to imply that he would change his opinions for a reward.

The inference of the poem is that a poet paid by a royal patron would have his tongue fettered and would never dare to express fully the thoughts, needs, and hopes of the common people; that he would be but an ill-paid courtier, and the spokesman of the gentry, never taking part in the real progress of the people toward freedom and truth. Inasmuch as he had formerly worked for reform, he would now seem to have lost character and to have become a time-server.

l. 4. *devote*. Dedicate, consecrate.

l. 13. *of us, for us, with us*. Are these prepositions nicely discriminated?

l. 19. *quiescence*. Refraining from aid.

1. 29. **Best fight on well.** It is best for him to fight on.

1. 30. **menace.** Threaten. Why does the speaker wish him to fight now against the people instead of returning to them? Does this show, in spite of his change of politics, a tacit admiration and respect for the lost leader?

### HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS

Like many others of Browning's narratives this story is told in the words of one of the persons concerned. Is this an interesting method?

Three men start out on horseback from Ghent with the message "which alone could save Aix from her fate." Why not one man? They pass a number of villages, Lokeren, Boom, Düffeld, Mecheln, Aershot, Hasselt, — where one horse falls from exhaustion — Looz, Tongres, Dalhem, — where the second horse falls. The third has just strength enough to gallop into Aix before it drops; and so Aix is saved. The event is imaginary, not historical. It is the pluck and grit of horses and riders in this adventure that excites our sympathy and admiration. That Browning was a good rider and a lover of the horse, may be guessed from many of his poems; for example, *Muleykeh*, *Thro the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr*, *Boot and Saddle*.

1. 3. **watch.** Guards were set to watch the city gates when closed at night.

1. 5. **postern.** A small gate for foot passengers beside the large one.

1. 9. **girths.** Consult the dictionary for the parts of the harness mentioned in the poem if you do not know them; *stirrup*, *pique*, *bit*, *cheek-strap*, *spur*. See also *croup*.

1. 12. **galloped.** Can you distinguish between the pace

of the horses in *Boot and Saddle* and in this poem by their respective metres? Ghent was over one hundred miles from Aix.

1. 41. Probably Charlemagne's church at Aix-la-Chapelle. The dome was 104 feet high and 48 feet in diameter.

1. 49. **buff-coat.** A military coat of buff leather.

1. 50. **jack-boots.** High military boots reaching above the knee.

1. 59. **burgesses.** Citizens of the borough.

#### HOME THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Spring is not the same in different climates. The gorgeous flowers of the South bring up in the poet's memory an exquisite picture of the English spring.

1. 6. **bole.** Trunk.

1. 14. In what respect is the thrush *wise*?

1. 17. **hoary.** Grayish white.

#### HOME THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

The writer is in a locality strongly suggesting the naval strength of his own land. The ship is passing the northwest coast of Africa. These four places were in view, — Cape St. Vincent, the southwestern point of Portugal, where in 1797 the English fleet won a glorious victory over a Spanish fleet of double the size; Cadiz Bay, where the second Spanish armada was destroyed by Essex and Raleigh; Trafalgar, where, in 1805, Nelson won a famous victory over the French and Spanish fleets; and Gibraltar, the magnificent rock fortress that guards the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, which England has commanded since 1704.

l. 5. **say, whoso turns.** Let him say, whoever he be that prays here as I do.

l. 6. **pray.** How to serve my country in return for all her services to me, is the question he puts to God.

l. 7. **Jove's planet.** Jupiter.

#### INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

This is one of the many stories of heroism that cluster round the figure of Napoleon. Ratisbon on the Danube was taken by the French under Lannes in 1809. A soldier bore the French flag into the conquered town and set it up in the market-place where Lannes had taken his stand. Immediately, though fatally wounded, he sprang upon a horse and rode out to the hill where Napoleon stood, to announce to him the victory. So proud and brave was he that he uttered no complaint and concealed his wounds until he fell at Napoleon's feet dead. The description of Napoleon is so characteristic that one recalls easily his very appearance in many pictures we have of him.

l. 7. **prone brow.** His head bent forward.

l. 29. Napoleon's flag had an eagle in the centre. **vans.** Wings or fans.

l. 41. Note Browning's appreciation of all worthy, virile, and vigorous men; and elsewhere his scorn of the coward, the sneak, the cruel selfish man, the weak truckling man.

#### HERVÉ RIEL

After the battle at the Hogue, 1692, between the French and English, twenty-two French ships, under command of Damfreville, escaped to San Malo, an island at the mouth of

the Rance River, and the English ships followed after. Outside the harbor the French signalled for a pilot to guide them in. The pilots who responded informed the admiral that the channels were so full of rocks and shallows that there was danger for small vessels even at high tide. It was now the ebb of the tide and the battleships, being large and heavy, rode low in the water. What chance could they have of safety or of escape from the victors? Damfreville in despair was about to give orders to run the ships aground and burn them on the beach, knowing well that France must be ruined in the loss of her fleet. Ere his bitter resolve could be carried out, there stepped forward a common sailor, Hervé Riel by name. His knowledge of the bay made him offer to guide, in safety, by a channel he knew, the biggest ship. The others could follow and anchor in the river Rance below Fort Solidor. The result is well told in the poem.

l. 39. **For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these.** Does each word here add to the picture? Notice the force and brevity of the narrative.

l. 43. **Pressed.** Impressing or pressing sailors for the fleet was similar to conscripting or drafting soldiers for the army. Those chosen were required to enlist.

l. 44. **Croisickese.** Hervé Riel's home was Croisic, as he himself states later.

l. 46. **Malouins.** People of Malo or St. Malo.

l. 49. **offing.** The deep sea outside the harbor.

l. 49. **Grève.** A name given to the sand flats near St. Malo exposed by low tide.

l. 49. **Disembogues.** Flows into the bay.

l. 53. **Solidor.** Harbor and fort of this name at the mouth of the river.

l. 89. **rake the bay.** Fire their guns across.



l. 97. Observe what was offered Hervé Riel as a reward.

l. 124. *Belle Aurore*. Beautiful dawn. Why do you think he did not ask for more?

l. 138. What is the only monument to his name? Is it not a good one?

### PHEIDIPPIDES

This legend of Pheidippides, the Athenian runner, is recorded by Herodotus. Darius, the Persian, emboldened by the capture of Eretria, sent messengers to Athens to demand earth and water, the symbols of allegiance. The Athenians, who took a noble pride in their city as the centre of wisdom and art for the civilized world, trusted not a little in Athenæ, their patron goddess, and in their splendid citadel, the akropolis. Proudly refusing submission to the approaching army of Darius the citizens sent a swift runner to Sparta to beseech her assistance in the forthcoming struggle. Sparta deliberated, and then answered that the oracles had warned her not to undertake any war when the moon was not full. Therefore she refused aid for the present. Pheidippides, with this answer, returned, as he went, in two days and nights, although he was detained on the way by an adventure. Burning with resentment at Sparta and chiding the gods that Athens worshipped for their lack of support, he was courageously crossing a difficult ravine on Mount Parnes, when he suddenly came upon the god Pan. This strange being, formed with hoofs and horns like a goat, was the patron of shepherds and dwellers in the wilds. Pan commanded him to halt and bade him tell Athens that the goat-god would aid them, though they had formerly refused to worship him. He said the Persians would be overcome in a field of fennel-weed, and that their bodies would strew land and sea. As a token he put

into the hand of Pheidippides a bunch of fennel (called by the Greeks *marathon*). Something, also, he promised the runner for his proud devotion to his mother-city.

Pheidippides reached Athens at last and reported the Spartan answer, related the colloquy with Pan, and showed the fennel-weed. Miltiades, the general of the Athenian army, questioning him further, regarding the promise of Pan to himself, learned that Pheidippides hoped to be relieved from his public duties as messenger to fight in the Athenian ranks and that he desired one day to marry the girl of his choice and to rear up children to whom he would teach the worship of Pan, his patron and the new patron of Athens.

Pheidippides did fight at Marathon, where the Persians were utterly routed. One more glory was reserved for him — to run with the news of the victory back to the city. There entering, he exclaimed with the remnant of his strength, “ Rejoice. We are victorious,” and overcome by the intensity of his joy and his service, he fell dead. The enthusiasm of his fellow-citizens over the ungrudging loyalty of Pheidippides caused them to turn his last words into a living epitaph. From that time, they began to say as a greeting, “ Chairete ” — “ Rejoice.”

*Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.* Rejoice, we conquer.

l. 1. I salute. This is characteristic of the Greeks who loved their country dearly in its physical features. Many gods were supposed to be attached to certain localities, or to powers of nature; or they patronized people of a certain occupation. Pheidippides salutes Pan, as the equal of Zeus, and of Athenæ of the ægis (shield) and spear, and of Phoibos and Artemis of the bow and buskin (laced shoe), and summons him to the city to give aid.

l. 9. Archons. Athens was governed by a body of nine

rulers called archons. They wore on their heads golden grasshoppers (*tettix*) to signify the inherent right of the Athenians to their land, since they believed the race to have sprung from the soil itself in the remote past.

l. 19. Eretria. An important city on the island of Eubœa.

l. 25. Sparta was more or less jealous of Athens; yet Pheidippides blames her too severely, it seems, since she really did send aid at the full moon, but too late to be of any assistance.

l. 33. Olumpos. Olympus, a mountain in Greece said to be the home of the gods.

l. 47. filleted victim. Sacrificial victim decked with ribbons.

l. 61. fosse. Ditch; here pass or cleft in the rock.

l. 73. fane. Altar or temple.

l. 79. The legend says that Pan appeared suddenly among the Persians on the field of Marathon and threw them into consternation, which lost them the battle. From Pan's habit of causing fright by his appearance arose the word *panic*.

### MY LAST DUCHESS

The Duke, negotiating for the hand of a lady, shows her father's envoy the portrait of his former duchess. With much pride he exhibits it as a rare work of art, a wonder, because of the skilful portrayal of the vivid and expressive face. The Duke describes the nature of his wife, and how he regarded her. Incidentally he reveals himself. Of *My Last Duchess* Mr. Arthur Symons says: "The poem is a subtle study in the jealousy of egotism, not a study so much as a creation: and it places before us, as if bitten out by the

etcher's acid, a typical autocrat of the Renaissance, with his serene self-composure of selfishness, quiet uncompromising cruelty, and genuine devotion to art."

l. 3. *Frà Pandolf*. An imaginary artist, like Claus of Innsbruck in the last line.

l. 45. *commands*. Explained by Browning as confinement in a convent or assassination.

l. 51. *dowry*. An amount of money customarily given by the bride's father to the bridegroom on the occasion of the wedding.

l. 56. Could you date the Duke by his character? Do you know any other stories that would seem to be contemporaneous? Could this story have been told as well in some other form, as, for instance, that of the ballad?

#### UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

One can easily imagine Browning listening with inward amusement to a sociable Italian count forced to live in an ancestral villa on the mountain side. The speaker is a feeble sort of person, easily amused by the doings of others, but utterly unable to entertain himself or to get enjoyment from inanimate nature. In his own disparaging description of his country place we see much that a less sluggish nature would enjoy, — its dark cypresses and firs, its fields of wheat, its red tulips and bees and fireflies, its prospects of distant wooded mountains and sweeps of valley. With a greater fund of personal energy and joy in healthful activity, one would scarcely need the diversions he mentions.

*Villa*. A country residence.

l. 12. *curd*. Soured milk.

l. 20. **oversmoked.** In March the olive trees on the distant hills look gray like smoke.

l. 29. **abash.** Embarrass.

l. 34. **thrid.** Pass in and out as a thread in sewing. **hemp.** The plant that furnishes the fibres from which rope is made.

l. 35. **cicala.** Commonly called the locust.

l. 39. **diligence.** Stage-coach.

l. 42. **Pulcinello-trumpet.** Blown to announce a puppet play, in which the comic character Pulcinello or Punch appears.

l. 43. **scene-picture.** Various announcements posted in the post-office.

l. 48. **Dante.** Italian poet. **Boccaccio.** Italian novelist. **Petrarca.** Italian poet. **St. Jerome.** Italian churchman. **Cicero.** Roman orator.

l. 50. **unctuous.** Full of religious fervor.

l. 51. **the procession.** An Italian church procession in which an image of the Virgin is carried.

l. 52. **seven swords.** To symbolize the seven great sorrows of Mary's life. What were they?

l. 60. **penitents.** Those who have joined the procession in order to do penance for their sins.

#### THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

This poem teaches that all service ranks the same with God. There is no high nor low. If, according to God's plan of the universe, each does his duty at his station whether small or great, the grand ideal will be realized and all will be right with the world. Our view is so limited that we are not competent to judge our work as either lofty or mean. A democracy of service is as fit as a democracy of privilege, which was the ideal of the poets of the Age of Revolution.

1. 25. **Gabriel.** The heavenly messenger. In the Bible he appeared to Daniel, Zacharias, and the Virgin Mary. He is one of the four great archangels; together with the other three, Michael, Uriel, and Raphael, he is said to have buried the body of Moses; he is also named as the angel which destroyed Sennacherib's host.

### EVELYN HOPE

*Evelyn Hope* is one of Browning's many studies of the aspects of love. In the poem a man speaks in the room where lies dead a young girl whom he loved. She was sixteen, he thrice as old. Though she died ignorant of the love she had awakened, the lover's passion was not in vain. He will wait for other lives, believing that in the end God will create the love to reward the love; and that the time will come, after the lover is fitted by learning and growing and gaining and forgetting, when he shall claim her. So as a token of remembrance he shuts a geranium leaf within the cold hand. The main idea of this, as of many others of Browning's poems, is that love is in itself an entity worthy of God's respect, — a beautiful creation that cannot, because of any sort of human limitations, become void and purposeless.

1. 33. **the time will come.** In some future existence he will speak to Evelyn Hope, and together they shall determine both the meaning of Evelyn's earthly beauty and the new service of the old lover in the new life.

1. 37. **Why your hair was amber I shall divine.** The poet will not believe that mortal beauty perishes in the tomb. Sensuous attractiveness is spiritualized and is taken as the outward temporal evidence of a permanent loveliness. In *The Statue and the Bust* he wrote: —

“What is the use of the lip’s red charm,  
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,  
And the blood that blues the inside arm —

Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,  
The earthly gift to an end divine.”

### ONE WORD MORE

Soon after the marriage of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, the latter placed in her husband’s hands a group of sonnets expressing her love for him. These poems were published under the title, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. In the poem *One Word More*, Browning in turn gives expression to his devotion to his wife. The poem appeared in 1855 in a volume called, *Men and Women*. It included fifty short poems, among which are *Andrea del Sarto*, *Cleon*, *Epistle to Karshish*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, etc. As the title indicates, he had displayed in these poems the inner self (as he saw it) of these fifty men and women. The ideas were supposed to be the ideas of the characters, not the sentiments of the individual poet. In *One Word More*, placed at the end of this volume, Browning dedicated the book to his wife and expressed in this poem only his own sentiments.

This display of his own personal feelings and ideas is so foreign to Browning’s style that he compares his composition to Dante’s painting a picture or Raphael’s writing a poem. It is evident, therefore, that Browning’s conception of the nature of poetry is different from that of Byron, who, it is said, forced his own sentiments and ideas through the lips of each of his characters. The difference, indeed, is typical of a change in the times. The struggle for the rights of the individual is giving place to a struggle for the rights of the

social whole. The ideals of self-renunciation and service are appearing in the poetry of to-day with increasing emphasis.

l. 2. **Naming me.** Giving the name, *Men and Women*.

l. 5. Raphael's lady of the sonnets appears in several of his best pictures.

l. 21. **Madonnas.** As the Sistine Madonna of the Dresden gallery; the *Madonna di Foligno* of the Vatican; the *Madonna del Granduca*, formerly in the palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but now in the Pitti gallery; the Madonna in the Louvre, known as *La Belle Jardinière* from the fact that the Virgin is seated in a garden where lilies and other flowers grow.

l. 33. **Beatrice.** Dante's love for Beatrice is perhaps the most celebrated love affair in literature. So idealized and spiritualized was his passion that some readers have believed that Beatrice never really existed.

l. 57. **Bice.** Diminutive of Beatrice.

l. 101. **Jethro's daughter.** Zipporah, the wife of Moses.

l. 165. Keats represented Endymion as in love with Diana, or the moon.



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